Dissent

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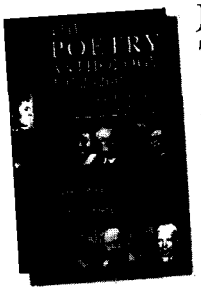

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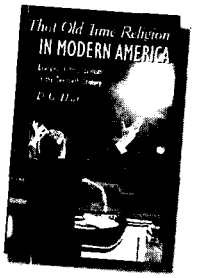

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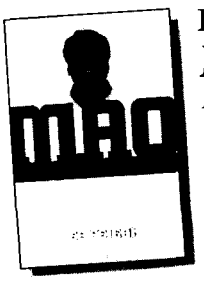

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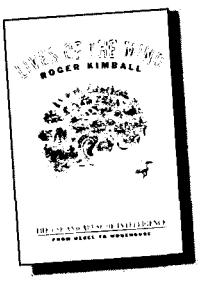

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Editor's Page

IRAQ IS NOT Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson sacrificed a popular majority and promising social reforms to a futile war. George Bush — who won the presidency while losing the popular vote — and the leadership of Congress—which owes its legislative majorities to slim electoral margins—are using the prospects of terror and war to impose their conservative domestic priorities. ■ The threat of terror is real. Anyone who scoffs at it will lose moral and political credibility—and ought to. But I don't see how the threat of terror is met by a pledge of allegiance to tax cuts geared to the wealthy. Unlike most of my *Dissent* colleagues, I support the use of force against Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. (Read the differing views in this issue's symposium on Iraq). But I can easily imagine (and sympathize with) a young soldier who asks, "If I must risk my life, perhaps sacrifice it, why isn't paying a fair, proportionate share for the public weal also part of patriotism? Just who sacrifices what in the name of citizenship?" ■ New York City, the site of Ground Zero, has a budget gap of about $6 billion; California's is $21 billion. If Congress would freeze federal tax cuts for the top one half of one percent of taxpayers, it could save some $600 billion in the next two decades (as Gene Sperling, the former Clinton adviser, pointed out recently in the *Washington Post*). It's something to think about as the Department of Homeland Security is established concurrent with tax cuts. It's something Democrats ought to address loudly and persistently (read Michael Tomasky's smart analysis of the post-election Democratic Party) ■ During the Second World War, Britain's Conservative prime minister, Winston Churchill, invited the Labour Party into his government and had to take account of its concerns. I don't really expect Churchillian gestures, even in this precarious hour, by America's ruling Republicans. But if they made them, they would include a freeze in tax cuts, real compromise on judicial appointments, and an end to talk about privatizing Social Security. As Bill Clinton appointed a Republican to be defense secretary, so George W. Bush could appoint a Democrat to the cabinet. The position of attorney general would be my first choice. (John Ashcroft could announce that he is sacrificing his job for the national good.) ■ If this last suggestion is a bit implausible, what about establishing a new post, say, Special Deputy Attorney-General for the Protection of Civil Liberties in War Time, and appointing a liberal Democrat to it? Perhaps a parallel appointment could be made in the new Department of Homeland Security. The alternative to patriotic piggybacking is domestic multilateralism.

M.C.

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THE NEW KILLING FIELDS

MASSACRE and the POLITICS OF INTERVENTION

Nicolaus Mills and **Kira Brunner,** editors

A prize-winning group of war reporters and analysts look back on the killing fields of the late twentieth century and pose provocative questions for the future of human rights.

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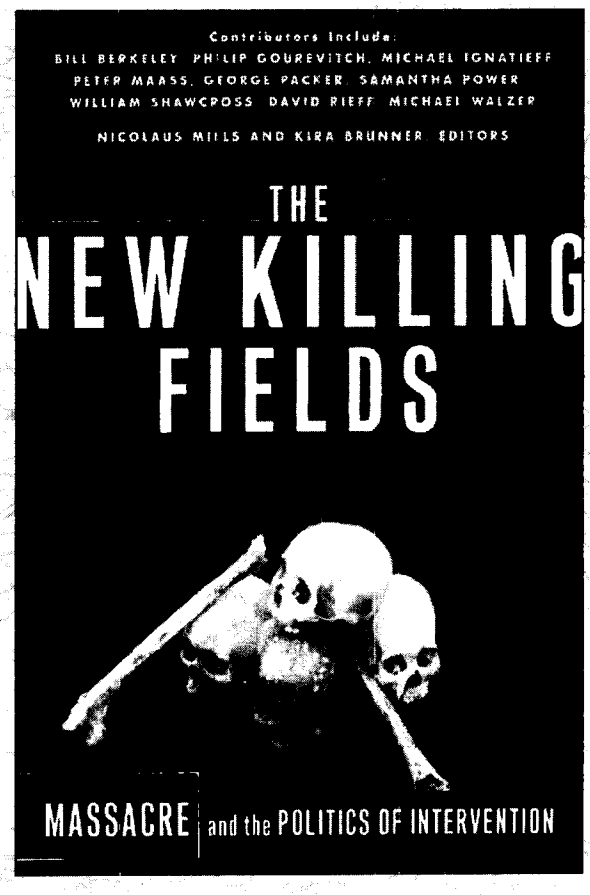
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Drums of War, Calls for Peace

How Should the Left Respond to a U.S. War Against Iraq?

We sent the five questions printed below to a group of editors and friends in November, as the UN Security Council was debating the restoration of the Iraqi inspection regime. They responded knowing that they would not be read for a couple of months—writing for a quarterly sometimes requires a degree of political courage. We are grateful to all of them.

There has not been a lot of courage visible in the Iraq debate so far. The U. S. government hasn't had the courage to provide the American people with an honest assessment of the risks involved in the war it has been threatening. Our European allies were not prepared to act independently of the United States to establish a strong inspection system; as I write, their commitment to make the system work (rather than to pretend that it is working whatever happens on the ground) remains radically in doubt. Many opponents of war here at home and in Europe have been unwilling to acknowledge the brutality of the Iraqi regime or the dangers posed by its weapons of mass destruction. The leaders of the Democratic Party wanted only to escape the dilemmas of war and peace so that they could talk about the economy (which they then failed to do in any effective way).

For myself, since I should share the risks of my colleagues, I want to see the inspection system work—and work in a way that represents a triumph for the UN, which has not had many triumphs, and which could be destroyed by a failure here. I would support a UN war to enforce inspection; I would not support a U. S. war for "regime change" (though I don't deny that the Iraqi regime needs changing). I could not support a peace movement whose purpose or effect is the appeasement of Saddam Hussein. But I believe strongly in the need to oppose the "National Security Strategy" of the Bush administration and its doctrine of preemptive war.

Michael Walzer

The Questions

1. Do you support an American war against the current Iraqi regime? If so, under what circumstances? And should this be a war for disarmament or for "regime change"?

2. Do you favor a UN-imposed inspection system for Iraq? Would you support the threat or the use of force to impose and sustain such a system?

3. What is your view of the Bush administration's new doctrine of preemptive war?

4. If there is a war, would you join an antiwar movement? Of what sort?

5. What are, what should be, the long-term goals of the United States in the confrontation with Iraq?

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Marshall Berman

I DREAD an American attack on Iraq, and I completely oppose it. Smart as our bombs may be, in a country with a regime famous for using its people as human shields, there is no way we can avoid killing thousands of innocent civilians. But that will only be the start. If Saddam Hussein is a murderous madman, as we think he is, and if he has developed "weapons of mass destruction," as we think he has, and if he feels us closing in on him, what will stop him from setting off his monstrous weapons? I don't want to imagine what floodgates our bombs could open, in what is already the most explosive part of the world. Eighty years ago, in his poem "The Second Coming," William Butler Yeats asked,

> And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
> Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

There are more rough beasts out there today. They're big with oil money and the best bombs money can buy; they don't slouch, they've learned to fly; they're sure their hour has come round at last, so they needn't keep time; they don't care when they die, so long as they can kill. Will Saddam Hussein go down in history with them, and take millions of people with him? I hope some combination of the UN and some regard for his people's welfare—an idea he has laughed at till now—will hold him back. I can't imagine what outer or inner forces will hold back George W. Bush.

Ironically, in recent years, one force for stability in the Middle East has been an impasse between the theocratic fascism of the Islamists and the secular fascism of the Ba'ath. Both possess great arsenals, and both are nonchalant, even extravagant, about expending their peoples' lives. For decades they have been at each others' throats; the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s is said to have killed more than a million people. But an American invasion, more than anything else I can imagine, could turn these mortal enemies into instant allies. How can anyone who cares about Israel see this prospect with anything but horror? For that matter, after 9/11, how can anyone who cares about America not see the horror?

I guess I shouldn't ask rhetorical questions. It's clear that the president and his men, the people who are actually bringing us this war, are having fun. And I don't mean the army! Colin Powell and our five-star generals, who have done hard time under fire, can imagine the landmines along this yellow brick road. (American leftists need a more nuanced perspective on the army, as we join the list of countries where the military men are relatively sane and the militarist megalomaniacs are civilians.) The president is getting his irrational exuberance from guys like himself, who spent the Vietnam War making money in Texas oil or else learning the Leo Strauss canon at the University of Chicago. In the Reagan era, Jack Newfield anointed men like these as "chicken hawks." Lately, the chicken hawks have been dissing the generals as sissies. They are tough guys on paper. They know their Machiavelli—at least they know Machiavellian sound bites. (They don't know Machiavellian irony.) I teach *The Prince*, and I feel like I'm reading the *Times*. "It is perfectly natural and normal to want to acquire new territory, and whenever men do what will succeed toward this end, they will be praised." "If the King of France could have taken Naples, then he should have..." A leader can control a people most completely by "keeping the people on a perennial war footing." The most triumphant princes are those "who have been able to confuse and disorient men's brains." By these standards, the president and his men have done well. They have edged the American people ever closer to a war footing and ducked any reckoning of the war's costs—its costs in money, its costs in freedoms lost, its costs in lives, theirs and ours.

If you've read Thucydides, an Athenian admiral, exile, and great historian circa 400 B.C.E. (full disclosure: I teach him, too), you'll remember the pathos of a war party riding high at the beginning of a war. Even if you don't read the classics, anyone old enough to remember the early sixties will know the scene. Not long after the 1964 election, I had an argument with Marty Peretz about Vietnam. I thought of LBJ as a man of supreme clarity and common sense; I couldn't imagine that he would carry

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on, let alone expand, what I saw as Kennedy's war. "Just you wait," Marty said: We would be lucky if it was over in a decade, and God only knew how much we would destroy, and how much we as a nation would be destroyed, as long as it went on. He was right, of course, and so I spent my youth as a soldier in the movement against the war. Eventually, there would be as many soldiers in the antiwar movement as in the war itself. (Many people were soldiers in both.) And, like the war, it went on for years and years and years.

What did I do in the antiwar? Nothing thrilling. Mostly I marched when I was told to march, sat down where I was told to sit down, *schlepped* what I was told to *schlepp*. Some of the things I did probably helped, others probably didn't. But it was great to be there. I got to feel like an American citizen in the best sense, fighting for my country, and feeling, in our movement, the kind of generous, inclusive solidarity that was supposed to make America special. I often thought, Wouldn't it be nice if we could have an antiwar movement without a war? When it was good, it surpassed its immediate aim of stopping something evil, and it nurtured and developed some luminous visions of how to live.

In the Nixon years the movement took some bad turns. At its worst it was pure pathology. Freud must have had people like us in mind when he spoke of "the narcissism of small differences." Radicals became rough beasts, ripped each other to pieces, slashed and burned friendship and love. For a little while, the antiwar movement became a microcosm of the war. In 1973, when American combat troops finally left Vietnam, it was a remarkable victory for the movement. But many of my fellow soldiers were too wrecked to enjoy it. Some were so depleted they didn't even notice it. Paul Simon's beautiful dirge, "American Tune" captured our movement's very own special form of post–traumatic stress.

Now another war is crashing down on us. It could go on for years, even for decades, if Iraq becomes, in James Fallows's phrase, "the 51st state." We need to put together—*somebody* needs to put together—a movement that can confront this war, in both its short and its long runs. In last year's demonstrations, the new-model movement showed its impressive diversity, as well as deep inner tensions, which the White House was only too glad to exploit. We need to remember that the USA is a rich and amazingly differentiated civil society. In any mass movement that arises in such a place, people are bound to have radically different styles, vocabularies, and views of the world. "How do you expect us to organize/march/occupy a platform/go to jail with *them*?" It's a reasonable question. But it's worth remembering that if America's Abolitionists, labor organizers, fighters for women's rights and for civil rights had got stuck on that question, our noblest movements would have died before they could be born, and our country would be far less human a place than it is. We have to find ways to live and work in peace with each other, even when we can't stand each other. Can the grizzled veterans of yesterday's movements overcome our post–traumatic stress in time for tomorrow? Have we learned something? Can we teach it? *Avanti*! *Shalom*! ●

MARSHALL BERMAN, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at CCNY/CUNY, has been working for some time on Times Square.

Mitchell Cohen

Is BAGHDAD simply another miserable regime? Just one of those unpleasant tyrannies that, sadly, speckles our globe, but ought not to compel overbearing concern? Much depends on how one answers this question. The answer, I think, is no. Saddam Hussein's dictatorship is pathological and distinct from other rotten regimes today, including those rooted in a similar ideology (Syria, for example).

It is not just a matter of this regime's fascist-like character (call it fascism-plus), although its ruling Ba'ath Party fused Pan-Arabism to the worst ideas of early twentieth-

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century Europe. It is not just Baghdad's brutality, although it is difficult to imagine a more vicious, vengeful regime. It is not just a question of Saddam's totalitarian aspirations at home and aggressive ambitions abroad, although Iraq's citizens and neighbors know firsthand that these aspirations and ambitions are beyond question. It is not even a matter of Iraq's dogged pursuit of weapons of mass destruction—although this is clearly Saddam's fixation, and he has demonstrated his readiness to use them against citizens and neighbors (and would be pleased to do likewise against Americans).

No, it is not "just" these things. It is their combination with the fact that this regime never keeps agreements. Virtually every major accord Saddam has reached with domestic or foreign foes—usually under pressures produced by his recklessness—lasts only until he recovers sufficiently to pursue his purposes. Ask Iranians. Ask Kuwaitis. Ask Iraqi communists. Ask Iraqi Shiites. Ask Iraqi Kurds. Recall the UN inspections.

So I conclude, reluctantly, that the options are not "war or peace," but "sooner or later." Unless there is a coup, force will eventually be needed to defang Saddam's regime. The only real questions are when, how much force, and what aftermath.

Some people will, undoubtedly, protest: how can you support the Bush administration? I worry a great deal about the Bush administration—about the fact that it has not thought out adequately what happens after a war, about its cynical exploitation of the Iraq crisis to pursue its dreadful domestic agenda, about its unconstructive unilateralist instincts, displayed in matters like Kyoto and the International Criminal Court. But I urge people on the left to judge the Iraqi danger independently both of distrust of Bush and of third-worldist prejudices.

Sooner or later? "Sooner" will be costly, dicey, scary. Wars always are, which is why every sensible means ought always to be used to prevent them. "Sensible" is the key word, however, and it is perilous and not sensible to invent choices that are comfortable to you, and then to choose between them. So although I think that arguments against preemptive war are formidable, and although I share many of their assumptions, I don't think that they are always persuasive. "Kantianism has pure hands, but it has no hands," warned Charles Péguy, the French essayist, a century ago.

"Later" will allow Baghdad to shore up, to expand, and to conceal further its lethal capacities. There can be no doubt that Saddam will do so. UN inspectors, who are arriving in Baghdad as I write, will, I hope, impair his efforts at concealment, but their success is likely to be temporary and partial. Inspectors were readmitted only because of an immediate American threat, not because of a Security Council resolution—even if some Western governments, intellectuals, and activists won't admit it. For Saddam, inspectors are a problem to be overcome, and he has proven staying power. Disarmed-Saddam is an oxymoron. So, I'm afraid that "later" just means rescheduling to his advantage, and the likelihood of immeasurably more suffering among Iraqis, their neighbors, and any outside forces moving against him at another date.

The past inspection record is mixed. After its spring 1990 inspection of Iraq, the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed Baghdad's claim to be fulfilling its duties as a party to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. ("Exemplary" cooperation, said the supervisor of the Agency's safeguards division.) A year later, after the Gulf War, it was revealed that Baghdad had initiated and concealed an ambitious nuclear weapons program—between ten and fifteen billion dollars of investment in some thirty sites, in a workforce of twenty thousand, and, significantly, in the production of highly enriched uranium. And there was insurance: each important level of the program had a duplicate.

The United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), established in 1991 to deprive Baghdad of its biological, chemical, and nuclear arms and longer range ballistic missiles, achieved a good deal. The problem lies in what it could not achieve because of Saddam's determination to undermine inspections. (He acceded to them in the first place only because of military defeat.) So UNSCOM verified that thirty-nine tons of VX, the deadly nerve agent, were destroyed, but it also feared

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that Baghdad had sequestered chemical materials sufficient to produce another two hundred tons of it. Saddam manufactured mobile germ laboratories and the like. Around a hundred and sixty bombs and two dozen Scud missiles mounted with anthrax could not be found by UNSCOM, according to its final report. Its mission ended in 1998—not because it was completed but because it was frustrated so well by Saddam's apparatus.

In recent months, as the crisis intensified, some voices protested: by what right does the United States press this issue? The more important question is this: why was Baghdad willing to forgo a hundred and fifty billion dollars in oil earnings rather than disarm? In some extreme cases "right" doesn't matter. For instance, Vietnam invaded Cambodia without right, for its own purposes, in violation of international law, and installed a new regime. I'm glad it did so because it ended the genocidal rule of the Khmer Rouge.

Other voices protest: isn't this Iraq business just a ploy by Bush? "War should not start from a bolt from the blue, but be the consequence of demonstrated Iraqi unwillingness to accept international rules," wrote Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, last summer. He is, of course, right that war ought never to originate from nowhere. But that is a banality. If Saddam has not demonstrated unwillingness to accept international rules, then unwillingness to accept international rules is indemonstrable. The UN—alas!—has demonstrated its inability to enforce them adequately.

Current intelligence reports of Baghdad's accelerated efforts to produce nonconventional weapons surprise no one who has paid adequate attention to and understood Saddam's pathology and priorities. True, people don't always pay attention. Back in the late 1990s, while Saddam was freeing himself from UNSCOM (and while, elsewhere, al-Qaeda was planning attacks), our patriotic Republicans thought the nation's focus ought to be on Monica Lewinsky.

Why deal with Saddam now? Because his menace, especially nuclear, will only swell. The situation was captured long ago by words attributed to Cicero: "How can you believe that a man who has lived so licentiously up to the present time will not proceed to every extreme of insolence, if he shall also secure the authority given by arms? Do not, then, wait until you have suffered some treatment and then rue it, but be on your guard before you suffer; for it is rash to allow dangers to come upon you and then to repent of it, when you might have anticipated them."

I AM WARY of words like "anticipation" and "preemption" because they can be abused politically. They ought not to be a "doctrine." But they are appropriate in some cases, and Saddam's priorities demonstrate why he is one. His pursuit of nuclear capabilities began over two decades ago, although plentiful oil gives Iraq no need of nuclear energy. Baghdad's budget priorities after the vast carnage of the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), which Saddam initiated, placed Iraq's high technology military industry over civilian reconstruction. Saddam's principal concern since UN sanctions began has been his arms and not his citizens.

Sanctions permitted Iraq to sell oil to buy medicine and food, but not military goods. Yet for some time now a loud, scurrilous public campaign has claimed on the basis of a UNICEF report that sanctions helped to kill some one million Iraqis. But why, then, did Saddam rebuff UN appeals to buy baby formula in 1998–1999? Why was he exporting food? Why was he importing massive quantities of scotch for his hierarchy and building an amusement park for the Ba'ath elite? Why has he spent two billion dollars on presidential palaces since the end of the Gulf War and offered another one billion dollars in aid to the Palestinian intifada? Why did mortality rates fall in the semi-autonomous Kurdish areas, where the UN—rather than Baghdad—administers proceeds of "oil for food?"* Doesn't anyone notice that the UNICEF report was written in

*I cull these points from Michael Rubin's devastating report, "Sanctions on Iraq," Middle East Review of International Affairs (online), December 2001. At various points in these comments I also draw material from the *Economist*, December 8, 2001, Chen Zak's *Iran's Nuclear Policy and the IAEA* (Washington Institute for Near East Policy Military Research Paper #3, 2002) and articles in the *New York Times*, September 8 and 16, 2002.

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collaboration with Saddam's Ministry of Health?

It is true that Iraqis have suffered. The reason is not the sanctions regime (which has, in fact, been quite porous). The problem is Saddam's exploitation of it. I do believe that there is a moral debt to be paid to Iraqis, but not because of sanctions. It is due because the United States encouraged Iraqis, especially the Kurds and Shiites, to rebel at the end of the Gulf War, and then stood back while Saddam slaughtered their intifada. I am not optimistic about democracy in Iraq, but this debt can be paid at least in part by support for a Saddam-free Iraq, and by making it clear that whatever the immediate post-war arrangements, post-Saddam Iraq belongs to Iraqis, not to the United States.

So I will not support an antiwar movement, even if it includes many good people. I hope, for the sake of honest public debate, that those good people keep this movement focused on Iraq. Iraqi suffering ought not to be exploited by "activists" with other agendas (such as Israel/Palestine, which has nothing to do with Saddam's tyranny and must be addressed on its own, unhappy grounds). In the meantime, I will support Iraqi democrats, even if they are few in number and their prospects difficult. I am antifascist before I am antiwar. I am antifascist before I am anti-imperialist. And I am antifascist before I am anti-Bush. ●

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Todd Gitlin

IF WISHES WERE arguments, the strongest argument for an American war would be the most ambitious—the wish, or prayer, that by deposing Saddam Hussein and occupying Iraq, the United States would install the first democratic regime in the Arab world, a regime that, in turn, would undermine the autocratic consensus that governs the region, reverse the Islamist movement, and foster the growth of anti-Islamist tendencies elsewhere. Such an outcome is devoutly to be desired. If only the wish sufficed.

But the world in which the wish would suffice is not the world we live in. An American war in Iraq is unlikely to turn the wish into reality. What it is far more likely to bring about is carnage and a boost to terror. The risks are too great to justify war. Wars get out of control and are, after all, hellish. That is why they must be matters of last resort. In Iraq's neighborhood, there are simply too many ways in which this particular war could get out of control. The scenario most likely to bring about the use of weapons of mass destruction is precisely the one George W. Bush has been angling for: an attack on Saddam Hussein's regime. The scenario most likely to bring about terror attacks—even on Americans—is precisely the same. The scenario most likely to win recruits for al-Qaeda is precisely the same. Against Saddam Hussein's future threats, there are substantial, not merely rhetorical, alternatives. The case for containment is strong. Smart sanctions (not the current blunderbuss kind), coercive inspections, and maintenance of the no-fly zones are the alternatives to full-blown war.

UN-imposed inspections are legal, proportionate to the threat, therefore just. The unanimous Security Council resolution mandating inspections is a testament not only to Bush's power but also to the strength of the case. The *proportionate* threat of force to ensure that inspectors have access to whatever they wish to inspect is justified. So is the use of force—if, and only if, it is proportionate. The use of force for "regime change" is not proportionate, nor is it justified by the Security Council Resolution.

Bush's preemptive doctrine is so sweeping, so unilateralist, so morally arrogant, so (in a word) imperial, it is likely to wreak havoc and endanger Americans. To define preemption expansively, as Bush's "National Security Strategy" does, is to grant oneself a warrant for war wherever and whenever the president desires—a recipe for disaster. As I've argued in *Dissent* ("Empire and Myopia," Spring 2002), empires can accomplish

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some good, and some empires and some imperial policies are better than others. But the Bush doctrine is cavalier. Among America's actual and potential allies, it is likely to turn suspicion to fury. To draw a line in the sand, the mountains, the forests, everywhere is to court disaster—not necessarily soon, but eventually.

Should Bush take the country to war, I would join an antiwar movement—or rather, I consider that I already belong to an antiwar movement. (I spoke against war at a rally on September 12, 2002, outside the UN building, for example.) My way of joining is not uncritical. To paraphrase Camus, I belong to the antiwar movement despite the antiwar movement. I've written critically about the leadership groups, arguments, and styles of the early antiwar movement, and expect to do so again. In any given antiwar protest I expect to see and hear some, or much, that I cannot abide. I'll abide what I can until I no longer can. I'll look for coalitions that are not fronts for the sectarian left, that reach out to realists and conservatives, that make practical and not just pacifist arguments, that aim for political influence and not self-satisfying theatrics.

What are the long-term goals of the United States in Iraq? No doubt, the main one in force is the "regime change" that Bush, who doesn't "nuance," blurted out as his objective until (largely Republican) political pressure drove him to endorse UN inspections. Compliance with Security Council resolutions did not rank among his goals until relatively late in the run-up to war. What should be American goals? To contain Saddam Hussein territorially, to force him to comply with the Security Council's writ, to prevent his development of weapons of mass destruction, to support Kurdish autonomy, to support democratic tendencies in Iraq—and to do all this under a UN mandate. These objectives do not rule out the use of force, but it should not be unilateral force. ●

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Stanley Hoffmann

I WOULD ONLY support an American war against the current Iraqi regime if (1) the current regime blocks inspections and refuses to carry out its obligations to disarm and a renewed and reinforced policy of blockade, sanctions and deterrence has failed and (2) the use of force is supported by the Security Council of the UN. It should *not* be a war for regime change.

I do favor both a UN-imposed inspection system for Iraq and the threat or use of force to impose and sustain such a system.

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The Bush administration's new doctrine of preemptive war would violate international law (including, of course, the UN Charter), be a recipe for chaos (if also adopted by many, or by dangerous countries), and mark a huge regression in international affairs.

If there is a unilateral or quasi-unilateral decision by the United States to go to war in Iraq, I would join an antiwar movement as long as it is a responsible, independent peace movement.

The long-term goals of the United States in its confrontation with Iraq should be (1) to disarm Iraq, not because it wants to become a nuclear power and "hates our values" but because it has so far violated its obligations to disarm after the Gulf War; (2) demonstrate before any use of force that the old notions of containment and deterrence are still relevant; and (3) act in such a way that the territorial integrity of Iraq is preserved, and that a majority of Muslim states supports our policies. ●

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Kanan Makiya

I SUPPORT A WAR on the grounds that the current regime of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq is a criminal state that has gone beyond the pale even as judged by the very low standards of the Middle East region, and certainly of the international community. My position rests on the exceptional nature of Ba'athi totalitarianism in Iraq (and is therefore not extendable to all the nasty states that exist in the world). Moreover, it derives from the particular historical experience—dating back to the 1991 Gulf War—that binds the United States to Iraq. The outcome of that war, which left the dictator in place and precipitated one of the harshest sanction regimes of recent times, places an extraordinary moral responsibility upon the shoulders of the United States to finish that which it in a very important sense left unfinished. Such a responsibility might not exist were it not for that particular historical experience. One does not transport half a million men halfway across the world and then leave the people of a country, who were not responsible for their state's outrage, broken and bleeding for ten years with no end in sight to the torment that they are going through.

I favor a UN inspection system with reluctance, only because I hope that it will give greater international legitimacy to what I think the United States ought to do. I do not think inspections will work, nor do I think the regime of Saddam Hussein can ever really allow itself to be totally disarmed. The idea that total disarmament is the same as "regime change" (an unfortunate phrase because it stops short of what the regime is being changed into) troubles me because it makes no sense and highlights just how deeply conflicted the Bush administration still is over the political objectives it wants to achieve in Iraq.

I don't like the Bush preemptive war doctrine one bit. There are far more powerful moral arguments for overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein and replacing it with something better. The problem with the doctrine is that it substitutes an abstraction, a mere possibility, for the real suffering of the people of Iraq, which is a far more convincing reason to go to war.

I would oppose an antiwar movement and do my utmost to point out that its supporters were playing into the hands of one the nastiest regimes since the Second World War (according to a UN special report on human rights abuses in Iraq).

The United States should work with the democratic sections of the Iraqi opposition to build a radically new kind of Middle Eastern state, one founded on the rule of law and minority and individual rights. Such an opposition exists and is working today inside the Iraqi National Congress. Iraq is not Afghanistan. It is a potentially rich and already well-developed country with an extensive infrastructure, a highly literate population, and the human and financial resources to transform itself. With outside help it could change from the destructive force it has been in the Middle East into an agent for democracy and reconstruction. Such a far-reaching project has the potential of breaking through the logjam of Arab politics and transforming the relation of the United States to the whole Arab-Muslim world. ●

KANAN MAKIYA was born in Baghdad, Iraq, and now teaches at Brandeis University. His books include *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq; Cruelty and Silence: War, Tyranny, Uprising and the Arab World;* and *The Rock: A Seventh Century Tale of Jerusalem.*

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James B. Rule

I DO NOT SUPPORT an American attack against Iraq under current conditions. Such an attack would be justified only with a broad spectrum of international support, based on a convincing consensus of imminent and extraordinary danger.

Both disarmament and regime change are worthy objectives where Iraq is concerned. One might make the identical statement, however, for any number of other dangerous states around the world—including some U.S. allies. No one has provided a convincing explanation as to why Iraq is to be singled out within this rogues' gallery.

I most definitely favor aggressive UN inspections, even if they have to be implemented under military force. Such actions could include unannounced visits to suspect sites, under force—provided such moves indeed had broad UN backing. A response of this kind would not only help defuse the situation in Iraq, but would also provide valuable precedent, if and when similar actions become necessary in future risky situations.

The Bush doctrine of preemptive war is frightening. It aims precisely at undermining significant and valuable potentials for development of multilateral, or indeed global, security systems—as I argued in the Fall 2002 issue of *Dissent* ("Dissenting from the American Empire"). The Bush doctrine seeks to extend American ukase all around the world, whereas we ought to be seeking ways for attenuating *all* national sovereignties in favor of collective global decision-making.

If war comes without fulfillment of the conditions cited above, I would certainly be public in my opposition to it. As in any collective action, participation in such a movement would require distinguishing one's own convictions and motives from those of other participants. In this case it would be particularly important not to give any support or comfort to those who sympathize with or excuse the Iraqi regime.

As with any dangerous, repressive regime, the aim with Iraq should be to create the strongest disincentives to misbehavior (through positive and negative multilateral sanctions) and to promote alternative political forces to the present regime, both inside and outside its boundaries. In short, our long-term goal should be to contain the regime, until such time as the successors to Hussein are prepared to reenter the world community. ●

JAMES B. RULE's latest book is *Computing in Organizations: Myth and Experience*.

Ann Snitow

REGIME CHANGE NOW? It would be wonderful if Saddam Hussein were gone, the miserable, old-style totalitarian thug. But do we want the new-style U.S. technothugs, smooth and increasingly precise, to take charge? Perhaps we'll look back at communism and rogue states like Saddam's and say, "What brutish amateurs!"

I am not saying that, in contrast, it's the United States, with its part-illusion of an ever slicker war machine, that is the real evil empire. That's too reductive a way to talk about the rival interests and motives that shape U.S. policy. But the United States makes no secret of its growing will and capacity to police populations at home and abroad by all sorts of mechanisms, from out-and-out war to repressive surveillance. "Regime change" and "preemptive strike" are the current Orwellian terms for the coming, expensive, overblown U.S. military buildup of the twenty-first century.

I'm one of those activists—and very out of favor we are now, in public discussions on both right and left—who think that the major work of the twenty-first century is not the war on terrorism but the establishment of a demilitarized internationalism. Our beleaguered group is skeptical that violence can deliver either safety in the long run or a polity we want. "Military solution" is our latest comic oxymoron, re-

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placing the old one about "military intelligence." Military power can never be the name of our desire.

Therefore, yes to disarming Saddam Hussein—but as a first step toward a far-reaching discussion of why disarmament is so important in general. By passing its recent resolution on Iraq, the United Nations bravely refused to grant the United States the free hand it wanted to start a war. But now the UN is itself on the line. If for any reason the weapons inspections of the coming weeks fail to convince, the UN has now taken responsibility to revisit the question of force and may well have to organize an international military intervention to make Iraq disarm.

But the process of making the world less dangerous can't stop with military action. Thugs and rogue states will not disappear any time soon, and violent rage, fear of attack, and the desire for revenge will continue to be the structuring emotions of our period—at home as well as abroad. So we have a choice: Gear up for continuous war or plan for confronting bullies and achieving justice some other way.

IF THERE IS a war, would I join an antiwar movement? I never left. But my long-term commitment to demilitarization doesn't necessarily mean satisfaction with past or current peace movements.

On November 8, 2002, an ad hoc group of seventy leftist activists met at Judson Memorial Church in New York City to "Take Back the Future." This group was urgently seeking a coherent response to the threatening post–September 11 world. We were all, also, trying to come to terms with our invisibility in public discourse, particularly after the sweeping victories of the Republicans in the mid-term elections just three days before. The church was all echoes, and the left was lonely.

But by the end of our second meeting a week later, discussion was more focused and energy was returning. We began to rethink how to represent anti-militarism to people who are justifiably afraid in the rush of new realities. There was general agreement that right now we have, on one side, the militarist strategies of Bush and Company and, on the other, a peace movement that is too supine, or running on automatic, or not alert enough to the problems of post–cold war internationalism.

As the group's initial conveners, Drucilla Cornell and I proposed the following list of caveats for a revitalized peace movement:

First, no to anti-interventionist talk. As the most powerful and richest country, the United States has enormous responsibility, which it has refused to shoulder. For example, we need peaceful U.S. participation in the Middle East and in the rebuilding of Afghanistan. An isolationist United States is selfish, ignorant, and dangerous. Rather, the United States must work toward more reciprocal relationships. Instead of "Hands Off," we need a rhetoric of care, service, rescue, exchange, and mutual support. Although "aid" has been an instrument of U.S. business interests in the past, U.S. wealth might function quite differently in more collaborative economic partnerships. Does such a shift toward partnership seem unlikely, given the power of the right and the track record of the imperium so far? Yes. But international cultural and economic cooperation is the only long-term strategy for security. We must struggle toward it if we are to have safety in the future.

Second, no knee-jerk anti-Americanism. Since the 1970s, it has been a common stance of U.S. peace movements to hate America as the key source of all injustice. This automatic rejection of U.S. values as hypocritical or in bad faith has sometimes led to the romanticizing of repressive regimes elsewhere, as if all that is bad comes from us and from nowhere else. There's an ethnocentrism in this idea, in spite of the terrible truths of U.S. world hegemony.

And so we come to the odd present moment. For multilateral relationships to work, some international agreement about shared values will be necessary. But George W. Bush's Patriot Act cancels those basic values Americans hold dear. Rather than reject U.S. ideals as hopelessly compromised by our amoral exercise of power, the peace movement needs to fight against the loss of our traditional rights—habeas corpus, freedom from search and seizure, freedom of speech and assembly. However unequally they have been applied, these basic rights are American achievements, and

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loyalty to them is a passion broadly shared by Americans. This sort of patriotism is a precious resource for all resistance, not to be recklessly tossed aside.

Third, no return to macho-style radicalism. The left has mostly squandered the cultural capital of the mass feminist movement by not taking its insights seriously and not carrying them forward into current crises. For example, there's little conceptual space now for building a practical, hard-headed peace movement that actively confronts the great pressure being put on masculinity since September 11. The U.S. fear of seeming weak receives no adequate critique. In our anxiety, rational assessments of Saddam's strength become challenges quite beyond us—from left to right. The enemy strong man looms to an irrational size, an unknowable boogey man, while the U.S. strong man seems solid and necessary, a bulwark against humiliation.

Gender stereotypes sharpen during any time of threat, and women and men who fear or criticize war are named cowards, irresponsible, cozily *hors de combat*, or beside the point. Buried in this patronizing response is a sort of demotion of feminist thought that has happened in other times of war. Feminist analysis—say, about bullies and why we all love them, or about why sexual freedom makes everyone so anxious—gets dropped out of public debate and is belittled as only relevant to the dynamics of private life. Calls for multilateralism, respect for difference, criticism of repressive patriarchal institutions, defusion of false fears, rational long-term planning to address appropriate fears—all are labeled utopian, soft, a failure to face the hard truth of a new world order. But, on the contrary, so-called soft, creative rethinking is our best hope for security.

This list of correctives to various, current peace movements could continue, but it is not meant to discourage engagement with those movements. On the contrary. A critical—and self-critical—left should work to develop alternative movement strategies. (This is what Take Back the Future and hundreds of other fledgling groups demonstrating in the streets and on campuses are seeking to do.) An entire discourse is missing, an imaginative description of the range of institutions needed to support a genuine multilateralism. These new initiatives would establish a variety of respectful relationships to some of the very nations our public discourse is demonizing now, relationships that the UN and other international movements have been developing for fifty years. ●

ANN SNITOW is a feminist activist who teaches literature and gender studies at New School University.

Ellen Willis

I OPPOSE THE Bush administration's drive to war on Iraq, though not without continuing internal argument. Should Saddam Hussein fail to comply with the Security Council's resolution, I would have to rethink my position. In the event of a popular democratic revolt against Saddam, I would support various forms of U.S. intervention, including sending troops, if necessary. And I am moved by Kanan Makiya's conviction that only the U.S. military can install democracy in Iraq, even as I believe he is investing his hopes in the wrong cast of characters. But at this moment I find it impossible to disentangle the call for war from the larger vision of international relations it is meant to test. Iraq has been a chronic problem, but the current crisis is a manufactured one. The Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz gang has seized on September 11 as an excuse and a cover for an agenda that long predated it: taking advantage of the power vacuum supposedly created by the fall of the Soviet Union to wage a forceful campaign for world domination.

To say that the Bush policy is one of preemptive war is misleading. If we have information that a country is preparing to launch an imminent attack on us, and we attack first, that is a preemptive strike—arguably an act of self-defense. Attacking a specific weapons cache or factory, as the Israelis did with their bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor (doing the

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world a favor, in my view), might also be justified on defensive grounds. But the Bush doctrine goes much further, claiming our right to make war on any nation we, in our sole judgment, perceive to be a threat to us or a hostile competitor for military power. It discards the principle that the only legitimate war is one that defends against aggression. While we as well as others have often honored that principle in the breach, openly flouting it invites others to do so and encourages wholesale contempt for international law.

The Bush doctrine is also a recipe for permanent war that threatens incalculable devastation abroad while wrecking democracy at home. In its delusions of unchecked American power it's a fantasy of lunatics. In reality, the post–cold war power vacuum has been filled by transnational capital, which will not passively allow its own goals—global stability and the spread of neoliberalism—to be undermined by American dreams of a new imperium: it's safe to conclude that the reason Bush felt forced to go to the UN, finally, was not the sheer eloquence of Colin Powell's arguments!

It's unclear at this writing whether Saddam's agreement to admit inspectors is a transient glitch or a major roadblock in the path to war (in which case the administration may turn its attention to new targets). Ironically, if the UN's efforts are successful, it may well be because Bush's belligerence convinced Saddam that he had no choice but to comply; it could be argued that, after all, someone needs to play "bad cop" in this kind of situation. The problem, though, is that the United States is not acting a part. The administration hawks don't want disarmament, they want conquest; and whether or not they get to pursue it in this case, their overall objectives will not change. What we're seeing is the first sally in an open-ended power struggle: the battle will be joined, and deals will be made, between Bush's ultranationalism and the amoral realpolitik of the corporate globalizers. In this scenario, democratic values have no place.

Although the Iraq campaign is billed as the linchpin of the war on terrorism, it is actually a substitute for a serious effort against the far more immediate threat of radical Islamism in general and al-Qaeda in particular. The administration's lack of urgency on this front is a scandal. In Afghanistan, the United States mismanaged the war by letting the Northern Alliance fight our battle, with two unsavory results: al-Qaeda leaders and fighters escaped en masse, and thuggish fundamentalist warlords took over much of the country. We have mismanaged the peace by refusing to provide security outside Kabul or spend real money on reconstruction. (According to a *New Republic* article, we are even depriving Hamid Karzai of his Special Forces bodyguards, turning the job over to private mercenaries—a move that like so many Republican policies seems designed to deprive satirists of material.) At home, the administration's main antiterrorist program is seizing every possible opening to dismantle civil liberties. Otherwise, national defense has been entirely subordinated to corporate desires for low taxes, cost-cutting, and deregulation as usual: airport security remains a joke; nothing has been done to protect our ports from smuggled bombs; the Indian Point nuclear power plant still presents an inviting target thirty miles from New York City; and so depressingly on.

ASSUMING NOTHING happens to change the above assessment and we do go to war in Iraq, I will participate in antiwar activity, but not as part of an "antiwar movement." In analyzing my objections to the current actually-existing peace movement, I've come to see the basic problem as the very concept of a movement organized around opposition to war—as distinct from a movement organized around a set of political principles that may, at a given moment, require antiwar activism, but at another may just as urgently require armed intervention. Aggressive wars are an emergency that must be addressed, but violence is an endemic human problem that no amount of antiwar moralizing will solve. Genuine peace can only be the byproduct of success in reducing the crushing weight of human misery—I'm speaking not only of poverty but of political, cultural, and religious oppression—that stokes human rage. That project requires politics and implies a recognition that not all wars are alike. But antiwar movements inevitably elide the distinction between a particu-

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lar war and war in general and become, in essence, apolitical moral crusades.

Even politically thoughtful pacifists contribute to this tendency insofar as they define peace as their goal and nonviolence as their bottom line. So, of course, do the far more numerous vulgar pacifists who are simply "against violence" as one would be "against sin." And so do self-proclaimed anti-imperialists whose politics boils down to general moral outrage against American power as such, regardless of where exercised and for what reason: Vietnam equals Bosnia equals Afghanistan equals Iraq. Though many New Left activists opposed the Vietnam War on the basis of their radical democratic principles, the absorption of the left by the antiwar movement ended up destroying it as a force for real social change. And I fear that if much of the democratic left, which at this point barely exists as an organized force, defines itself as part of an antiwar movement, the new radicalism we need will never emerge.

What, in the long run, should the United States do about Iraq? What *can* the United States do that makes any sense in the context of a foreign policy that's altogether unprincipled? How, for instance, do we oppose Saddam Hussein while supporting the pernicious and, from an antiterrorist perspective, more dangerous regime in Saudi Arabia? In the long run, the aims of U. S. foreign policy should be to support democratic and secular movements; oppose theocracy and authoritarian nationalism; subsidize the economic reconstruction of poor countries devastated by war, famine, ecological destruction, and AIDS; and abandon our leading role in forcing neoliberalism down every country's throat. What can the left do to move America in this direction? While opposing Bush's war, I don't want to lose sight of that question. ●

ELLEN WILLIS's most recent essay on international politics post-9/11 is "The Mass Psychology of Terrorism," in the forthcoming anthology *Implicating Empire* (Basic).

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Acting Alone

David Bromwich

UNILATERALISM is a weak name for the foreign policy sketched in "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America"—a document released by the White House in September 2002 and discussed inadequately in the press. The strong name for it is imperialism. We will be hearing more about that as Europeans come to assess the actions of the Bush administration in the light of this thirty-one-page manifesto. The document, prefaced by a signed three-page letter from George W. Bush, is in large measure a tissue of quotations and paraphrases of the president's speeches, and it has been clear for some time that the speeches are written by a clever and versatile team. The well-engineered bursts of pulpit eloquence are cemented by think-tank platitudes of a humbler workmanship, so that the total impression is at once bright and dull, commanding and crude. Even so, the National Security Strategy document bears looking into. This is the source that the Bush administration wants Americans to consult in order to understand the aims that guide our international actions. Each of its nine numbered sections is headed by a quotation from George W. Bush, and when you combine their effect with the world-definitive posture of the cover letter, you are aware of a deference to the personality of a leader that makes this production, by the standards of constitutional democracy, unusual. Practical wisdom in the face of terror comes to be identified with the always apposite words of a single man.

The first section gives an overview of the contents, the second a rhetorical portrait of the United States as the champion of human dignity. Four subsequent sections (3, 4, 5, and 8) are exclusively concerned with the attack part of defense. The football coach's apothegm, "The best defense is a good offense," is quoted. Defense proper, of the "homeland" in particular, turns out to be the subject of section 9, while two interpolated sections (6 and 7) deal with economic assistance, the imperative of the "free flow" of money and goods to build "the infrastructure of democracy" in the poorer countries of the world. As the document proceeds, it becomes clear that the National Security Strategy takes for its domain all of international relations and foreign policy. Everything the United States could conceivably do in the world is now to be subsumed under the heading of a national defense that is itself an extension of homeland security.

The president's letter opens by pointing out the difference between the twentieth century and the twenty-first. The "great struggles of the twentieth century" were those "between liberty and totalitarianism." Liberty won; and this has become generally known. "People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children—male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor." The simplicity of the thought is captured by the locution "people everywhere"—a phrase with roots in advertising. People everywhere want a good product. But the sense here slides perilously between two distinct facts. People everywhere may have a germ of the idea that they would like to see men and women treated equally and given the same educational opportunities. That does not mean that all people, in every part of the world, if asked whether they believe in the equality of women, would now answer yes. The underlying sense of the assertion is that the North Atlantic commercial democracies have discovered what people everywhere *will finally realize themselves to have wanted all along*. But this idealism is undercut

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by an equivocation. America will seek "to create a balance of power that favors human freedom." Slowly, then: as the balance of power favors freedom for more people, those people will discover how desirable freedom is. A moderate downturn weighing in late to balance the latest pounding directive is a recurrent rhythm of the document.

In the twenty-first century, the enemies of freedom are secretly hostile or stateless persons who seek to obtain weapons of mass destruction. "As a matter of common sense and self-defense," the president's letter declares, "America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed." The last five words are crucial. We reserve the right to attack any country whose power is growing ominously, and the more so if it acts as a haven for such persons. Here is a central clue to the doctrine of "regime change" that now seems likely to extend beyond Iraq. But can such a policy be strictly military in its bearings? The president's letter admits the inadequacy of that approach when it says near the end: "Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders." So we ought to do something to alleviate poverty, in line with our fight against terror, provided the free flow of investment capital is permitted in the countries we assist. "The United States will stand beside any nation determined to build a better future by seeking the rewards of liberty for its people. Free trade and free markets have proven their ability to lift whole societies out of poverty." Readers with a short memory may simply credit this. The truth is that free markets and money-flows did no such thing for Indonesia or for Russia or for all of sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, those methods had the opposite effect: money departed faster than it came, and left behind a gutted society.

Section 2, the real preamble of the document, recalls the American commitment to universal values associated with human dignity. We must defend liberty and justice "because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere." That seems a vital point for American civic education; and the authors might have added more without fear of contradiction. We *trust* those who agree with us about these things more than we trust those who do not. But there is a vast difference between knowing that a principle is right and knowing that one has a right to establish that principle by force. The sweep of the document assumes that once we recognize the application of a principle to "all people everywhere," we have a warrant to do whatever must be done to enforce its acceptance. Such violent paternalism will always exist in tension with the principle of liberty. The document goes on, by its very phrasing, to give an illustration of the danger: "No nation owns these aspirations [to liberty and justice], *no nation is exempt from them*" [emphasis added]—as if acknowledgment of the aspiration were a burden lesser peoples might well shirk. Combine this assurance with the stress on the flow of money and goods from the more to the less powerful, and you gain a sense of how the architects of American national security in the twenty-first century are hoping to inherit the mantle of the architects of the British Empire in the nineteenth. The conservatism of British imperial policy held it wiser not to take on the tutelage of the whole world at once. The abstention may have come from prudence and elitist arrogance—thin motives compared to the robustness of the National Strategy document—but just possibly that prudence added half a century to the life of the empire. An acceptance of backward nations as backward, an agreement not to make them "progressive" and aggrandize the empire by money-flows and sudden fortunes, was one of the traits that distinguished British from, say, Belgian imperialism. If we Americans mean to give up that form of prudence or humility, the reason must be that we find ourselves so glutted with power that we have no further use for caution.

Section 3 quotes the president's speech of September 14, 2001, on the need "to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil." A seasoned former White House operative, Pat Buchanan, noticed several months ago what mainstream columnists have passed over in silence, namely that the Bush administration was committed to war against Iraq as

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soon as the president spoke his formula about the "axis of evil." That was an example of policy by speech-writing—a phenomenon peculiar to this administration, and yet common in it. Go back now to the phrase about our need "to rid the world of evil." There already, on September 14, 2001, was a signal example of policy by speech-writing, done with so small a touch as the omission of the definite article before *evil*. An alternative phrase must have offered itself and been rejected: "to rid the world of *this* evil." After all, the particular evil of a terrorist network such as al-Qaeda is large enough and dreadful enough to make its eradication a tremendous work of blended might and resolve. But omission of the definite article makes the evil of al-Qaeda identical with evil itself. Crush it, the grammar now asserts, and you will rid the world of all evil. Many of the president's followers are religious, with an apocalyptic tinge to their piety: a consideration that cannot have been far from view when the writer cut out a word and turned up the heat.

To rid the world of *evil itself*. If that is the task we are embarked on, it follows that we need only act well against the terrorists for evil to cease to be one of the conditions of life. This is not a contingent and political but an absolute and metaphysical statement, a promise of salvation such as only religions, until now, have dared to make and only the gods of religions have been supposed to keep. The present generation of terrorists in many ways resemble a kind of man the world has known for a long time. They seem to think about their crimes as Macbeth thought about his: "that but this blow/ Might be the be-all and the end-all—here,/ But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,/ We'd jump the life to come." The inference from the president's "rid the world of evil" must be that such ambitious men will cease to exist—that once our battle is finished, no more such men will be born. But how can he know? Do we believe ourselves launched on a quest that when complete will have scoured human nature of its imperfections forever?

Section 3, the most substantive of the document, speaks of the necessity for "direct and continuous action using all the elements of our national and international power." This declaration is accompanied by an all-important phrase: "we will not hesitate to act alone." Why do individuals hesitate to act alone? They do so for the same reason that nations may hesitate: because the approval and sometimes the commitment of others may serve as a check against insanity. Whole communities may go mad as well as individuals—the twentieth century affords examples of that in Germany in the 1930s, and in China in the 1960s. People under the dominion of a passion that animates everyone, a fear that compels action and reaction in a single circuit, may collectively lose their grip on reason. Out of passion and zeal combined, they surrender the ability to do anything but temporarily quell the terror that holds them stunned and holds them together. It is for this reason, one wants to say, that a community that has the time to think ought to hesitate before acting alone. Yet before one can confront the document on this point, the argument shifts its ground. After the absolute assertion of a duty to act alone on behalf of all mankind, section 4 reverts to a moderate tone. We are informed that when "states falter" the United States will act to "restore stability."

Section 5 introduces the problem of *nations* that seek to obtain weapons of mass destruction. This was obviously written with Iraq in mind, and it repeats the Bush administration's recent charges. The leaders of such nations "brutalize their own people and squander their national resources for the personal gain of the rulers"; they "reject basic human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands." There follows a justification of preemptive war: "The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction—and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively." Given the depth of the uncertainty here described, what can be the meaning of "if necessary"? From every innocent person you kill, a new enemy may grow—

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a friend or relative of the victim or an appalled and angry witness. This irreducible axiom of moral psychology, which must never be forgotten, the document works very hard to make its readers forget.

With section 6, we find ourselves in the conventional domain of capitalist utopian thought. Free markets will "ignite a new era of economic growth." Those markets will put out their own fires, however, and bring—*stability*. For "improving stability in emerging markets is also a key to global economic growth." On this view of human nature and society, improving stability is synonymous with planting governments friendly to foreign investors. "International flows of investment capital are needed to expand the productive potential of these economies. These flows allow emerging markets and developing countries to make investments that raise living standards and reduce poverty." Again, the recent history of Indonesia would make a different point. Closer to home, so would Argentina. But the invocation of money flows is not a science touchable by facts; we are on hallowed ground, in the presence of Our Lady of the Market. Free trade is accordingly described as a "concept" that arose independently of financial practice, "a moral principle even before it became a pillar of economics." The truth is that the morality of free trade came with, not before, the practice of free trade in the nineteenth century, but an error of a hundred years cannot unsettle this trance of revelation where the good, the profitable, our self-interest, and our love of humankind all dovetail in a seamless artifice. The oddest detail of this section is an afterthought about "the environment," tucked in at the lower end of a column of journalist-bullets. "We will incorporate labor and environmental concerns into U.S. trade negotiations." The document goes on to summarize G.W. Bush's proposal for the redefinition of poisonous gasses. "America's greenhouse gas emissions," he declared in the course of defending his rejection of the Kyoto accord, would be reduced "*relative to the size of our economy*" (emphasis added). The economy comes before life and before breath. Eight drops of poison in an economy of two hundred is, relatively, an improvement on five drops of poison in an economy of one hundred.

THERE IS A suspicion, now widely shared abroad, that the United States has become a dogmatic and intolerant nation in its understanding of happiness. The evidence normally cited is that we reject the possibility that any country could come to be happy, united, prosperous, and at peace by a method somehow different from our own. Section 7, on foreign economic assistance, will go far to confirm that impression. The document cannot bear to offer a strategy for nation-building without first attacking the very idea of nation-building. For that purpose, it adapts the language that the Reagan administration once deployed against welfare: "throwing money at programs," they called it, and to that derisive certitude of American politics the Bush doctrine adds an international dimension. "Decades of massive development assistance have failed to spur economic growth in the poorest countries. Worse, development aid has often served to prop up failed policies, relieving the pressure for reform and perpetuating misery." The document takes seriously, on the other hand, the idea of foreign shareholders buying stock in a developing nation. Something called the "Millennium Challenge Account" has been set up for countries whose governments "rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom." Presumably, no such grants will be forthcoming to countries that favor cooperative local enterprise over private foreign enterprise. The intended analogy here is the "matching grants" offered by charitable foundations to people or institutions that have once proved their ability to raise money on their own. Be hospitable to American business, says the investment corollary of the National Security Strategy, and we will give you the money to allow you to welcome more of our investments.

In keeping with the same program, the Bush administration here announces that it will sponsor a "comprehensive reform agenda" for enlarging the activity of the World Bank. The instrument is to be increased contributions to the bank's International Development Association. Oversight of all these interlocking funds will enable the United States to monitor results more closely, and "we will also challenge universities, nonprofits, and the

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private sector to match government efforts by using grants to support development projects that show results." The free-flow-of-capital message could scarcely be more blunt. We mean to run the world the way you run a business. But the eager authors are not yet satisfied, and they make the case double-sure with italics: "*Open societies to commerce and investment.*" Most of the money for economic development, they explain, "must come from trade, domestic capital, and foreign investment. An effective strategy must try to expand these flows as well." The quasi-organic metaphor of "flows" is really a form of prayer—like the metaphor of growing the economy when nothing will grow on earth any more. And here is another afterthought: "*Emphasize education.*" Who will deny that "literacy and learning are the foundation of democracy and development"? This turn of section 7 might be taken to imply that people need to be educated before they can say exactly how much foreign capital they want to conduct into their native economies. But the logic of the section has gone the other way: first we make the poorer nations as much like us as possible by the inundation of money and goods; then we teach them what they have chosen and why they must go on choosing it.

A halfhearted penultimate section, "Agendas for Cooperative Action with the Other Main Centers of Global Power," concerns the need to leave ourselves some scope anyway for multilateral action. NATO is offered as the leading example of an alliance that ought to be preserved. Russia and India are mentioned in a tone that is confident, bracing, congratulatory if slightly superior. An attitude as paternal, but rather less warming, appears in a paragraph on China. Its leaders "have not yet made the next series of fundamental choices about the character of their state. In pursuing advanced military capabilities that can threaten its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region, China is following an outdated path"—our path, admittedly, but the right path for no other country in the twenty-first century. The authors bring back the unilateralist message flatly, to round out the document, but the unscheduled yet hardly avoidable thought of China has left an after-chill. In dealing with so vast a political and geographic entity and so substantial a portion of the human race, can we actually imagine that we ought not to hesitate before acting alone?

Section 9 concludes the document with a pledge by the United States "to dissuade future military competition"—a canny misuse of *dissuade* as a simple transitive verb with an impersonal object. Dissuade here means in fact preclude by the show of force. And the show may matter more, the document suggests, as we move farther from our own borders. "The presence of American forces overseas is one of the most profound symbols of the U.S. commitments to allies and friends." The authors were well advised to cast that statement in a highly abstract form. It may require a mystical calculus to reckon how many troops are needed to perpetuate the symbolism in question on a cluster of bases like those the United States maintains in Okinawa. The forty-three thousand American soldiers now stationed on that island occupy the choicest one-fifth of the land, and school children pursue their studies under the roar of 26,000 flights of planes and helicopters a year: a landing or a takeoff about every ten minutes. Some unpleasant litigation in the 1990s, over incidents of rape, reckless driving and manslaughter, and the mass dumping of depleted uranium shells, suggests that gratitude is not the only common response to the symbol. But the idea that power could ever corrupt its possessor, or that it could be seen as corrupting, is not hinted at or properly to be inferred from a single detail of "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America." Defensive, ambitious, and self-contradictory as the document is, in the quality of its self-knowledge it is perhaps the most innocent statement of policy ever exhibited by a major power in the history of the world. ●

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Calling a Truce

Ending the War within the Democratic Party

Michael Tomasky

LAST FALL'S disastrous elections should have taught the Democratic Party many lessons. The list opens with the minor and tactical (it should not parade before the public a national chairman who delivers himself of ill-advised and oafish outbursts before the election and then appears at the National Press Club the day after the wipeout to announce that the party had "a good night"); it proceeds on up to the profound and historical (is the Democratic Party as presently constituted even capable of coming up with innovative ideas?).

But the chief lesson is this: the first thing the party needs to do is to make peace within itself. Nothing grated on me more in the days after the election, or struck me as more fatuous and dangerously wrongheaded, than hearing the sentence "This proves that the party has to move to the _____," the blank being filled by "left" or "center." Either argument is a prescription for ensured minority status for years to come—that is to say, a prescription for helping to ensure that the Republican Party controls electoral politics for the foreseeable future. Several things have to happen to prevent this, but it's clear that the first of these is that the leaders of the two wings of the party, the liberal and the moderate, have to take the hatchet now lodged firmly in all their backs and bury it.

I would love to be able to write that the party should migrate to the left; to say that more fervently populist rhetoric, closer affiliation with labor, forcefully stated opposition to war, and unapologetic support for a range of social programs would offer the voters a clear choice and roll back the right-wing agenda of the Bush administration. Well, such a program would offer the voters a clear choice, all right, but the truth is that it's a choice a majority of voters would probably reject. The Republicans would have a field day with such a Democratic program. The media would dismiss it as old-time religion. And the truth is that in large part it *would* be old-time religion: A foreign-policy position based on skepticism about the use of American power abroad that was appropriate and morally correct in the 1960s has limited justification in today's world, where we face a threat in Islamic fundamentalism and the terror it incites that is an altogether different creature from Ho Chi Minh. Many Americans, many liberals and progressives, still support such a posture, and passionately. But they are not half the electorate. Not close. Also not close to majority status is the percentage of Americans who opposed welfare reform in 1996. The poll from the time that I remember most vividly showed that Americans backed welfare reform by 52 to 7 percent, with the rest being undecided or having no opinion. Another poll showed that even a plurality of *adults on welfare* supported the bill. In any event, it passed, and though it had some negative effects, it has had more positive ones; and politically, it removed a huge bludgeon from the Republicans' hands. Meanwhile, because of the strong economy of the 1990s, more poor people left poverty than at any time since the 1960s. It seems fair to say in retrospect that the liberal wing's apocalyptic opposition to that bill was excessive. It should learn from that episode and adapt itself accordingly.

Similarly, however, a rush toward the center on all issues would be folly as well. There are still many questions on which the Democratic and Republican parties have fundamentally different outlooks and represent distinct and irreconcilable interpretations of the world. Democrats have to stand firmly for tolerance and secularism. They must support abortion

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and gay rights, and they must oppose privatization, partial or otherwise, of Social Security. They need to be willing to assert that an effective market requires regulation—that a business world in which regulatory mechanisms that have been in place for, in some cases, half a century are eliminated is a world that quickly turns Hobbesian, hurting workers, investors, and pensioners alike. They must mount an argument against endless tax cutting and for a role for the federal government: Taxpayers may be able to take their tax rebates and buy their children new winter coats, and while new winter coats are certainly not to be gainsaid, there are certain things taxpayers can't do with their rebates that only the federal government can do—clean rivers, protect air quality, provide unemployment insurance. If the Democrats chuck these and kindred principles, they might as well have a closeout sale and be done with it.

In sum, the Democrats need to define themselves as a broad center-left party that accommodates both tendencies and accepts ideas from both. Yes, easier said than done, much easier; following the maxim—with which anyone who's been involved in progressive politics should be familiar enough—that smaller differences make for stronger animosities, the left and center wings of the Democratic Party have often considered each other as a greater enemy than either has regarded the Republicans. The debate has defined the party for nearly two decades, having gone through what I would identify as four basic iterations. The debacle of the 2002 election should tell Democrats that it's time for a fifth: the end.

THE FIRST AND longest phase of the argument was the Healthy Tension phase. It rose from the carcass of Walter Mondale's 1984 presidential campaign. Mondale's ascent to the nomination that year was a fait accompli; he had Jesse Jackson on his left and Gary Hart on his right (Hart was quite liberal, but since he had no union backing and talked suspiciously of "new ideas," and since Jackson already held down the port side, Hart positioned himself somewhere to starboard). Mondale did indeed represent rather well what the Democratic Party stood for at the time. But since he lost forty-nine states to Ronald Reagan (and barely won his home state of Minnesota), it was reasonable to believe that some rethinking of assumptions was called for.

Thus was born, in 1985, the Democratic Leadership Council. It was the brainchild of Al From. From was born into a Jewish family from South Bend, Indiana, whose Democratic loyalty was secure before Harry Truman recognized Israel, and utterly unshakable afterward. He wrote editorials for a paper in the Mississippi Delta in 1964 calling for the desegregation of the schools. He worked in the War on Poverty. He backed Edmund Muskie in 1972, and was unnerved by McGovernism. He worked for Congressman Gillis Long, a cousin of Huey, in the 1970s as he came to believe that the New Deal coalition was fraying and that the Democrats were too suffocated by the demands of their interest groups. And so, on February 28, 1985, he and a group of like-minded legislators announced the formation of the DLC. He had co-written the press release himself, with help from a newly elected senator from Tennessee named Al Gore.

The DLC was, almost from the moment of its inception, two things that many Democratic organizations were not in 1985: influential and rich. Supporters could contribute as little as $50, writes Kenneth S. Baer in *Reinventing Democrats*, his 2000 book about the DLC, but "it primarily pursued givers who could donate at least $1,000," which made the group "an elite organization in every regard." It also made the DLC pro-business and, by definition, anti-labor, at its emotional core. And the DLC had influence: Many of the party's young, rising stars were members—Gore, Chuck Robb, Richard Gephardt, that governor down in Arkansas whom many people recognized to be a real comer. And the Washington press corps—just then in transition from the old bourbon-and-a-smoke cohort that had grown up listening to John L. Lewis's speeches on national radio to the Evian-and-Stairmaster generation whose image of labor had more to do with Lane Kirkland and Jimmy Hoffa—was hungry for its message of rejection of paleoliberalism.

Michael Dukakis was not a DLCer, but his most famous line from the 1988 campaign—

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that "this election is about competence, not ideology"—reflected the group's impact on the way he positioned himself. Still, not enough; still, traditional liberalism emerged from that election discredited. Activists in the party's established interest groups began, however grudgingly, to see the DLC's point; now, even many old-line liberals agreed, we were sick to death of losing, and we just had to do whatever it took to win.

Bill Clinton owed his emergence on the national scene to the DLC, and the platform planks that got the most attention were the centrist ones. But it's easy to forget that he covered his bases in the traditional liberal camps, too; for every William Winpisinger of the machinists' union scolding Clinton at every turn, there were labor leaders aplenty who made their peace with him, to say nothing of women's groups, gay and lesbian organizations, and other liberal stalwarts. I don't have the space here to delve into a lengthy consideration of the Clinton tenure, whose chief twists and turns are well known; suffice it to say that Clinton—at different times, in different ways—managed both to placate the two wings of the party and to infuriate them. Liberals admired his defense of affirmative action but scorned welfare reform. Centrists hated Hillary's health-care plan but were pacified by the new incremental policies he embraced as he ran for reelection against Bob Dole in 1996. Arguments between the two wings of the party during those years were sometimes intense, and they should not, in retrospect, be minimized. But at least the party controlled the White House, and on balance, activists from both wings of the party could announce themselves less than inspired, perhaps, but satisfied enough with how things were going, especially with regard to the roaring economy, in January 1998.

THEN CAME the second iteration: The Monica phase. We do not usually associate "that Lewinsky woman" with either policy debates or sober historical shifts, but in the current context, I think, we need an exception, and for this reason: The Lewinsky scandal—that is, the dipsomaniac tumult in the media and the frantic madness of the right—united the two wings of the Democratic Party. Now there was a crisis, a gripping, emotional crisis, and now there was a clear goal: hold on to power; whatever misgivings we have about Clinton, people said to one another, we can't let them destroy this presidency *this* way. I know for my own part, as a liberal, I was halfhearted about Clintonism *until* the Lewinsky scandal. It made me see in a way I hadn't before not only how low the right wing would go in order to bag its quarry, but the full palette of its cultural and philosophical assumptions and beliefs (if they thought Bill Clinton, a Southern Baptist, was this evil, what did they think of me, or my gay friends, or my atheist friends, or my gay-atheist friends?). The conventional wisdom today, after the attacks of September 11, is that the nineties as a whole were one big play period, a decade of irresponsibility, and that the Lewinsky interval was particularly frivolous. I say the opposite: the thirteen months of impeachment were deathly serious, a period when the politics of small differences that had animated the Democratic Party's internal debates were of necessity cast aside to defend a popularly elected president against a cadre-driven coup d'état.

BUT IT ENDED, and came iteration three, the Battle Phase. This was, essentially, the Gore campaign. This history, too, is well known; there was the populist Gore of the Democratic convention, inveighing against "the powerful" in behalf of "the people"; and there was the bland-as-milk Gore of other moments, afraid to pronounce himself against the teaching of "creation science" and unwilling during one of the debates, when a black audience member asked a question that invited him to express just one ounce of skepticism about the death penalty, even to aver that it had been unfairly administered in Texas. After Gore lost—well, he won, but after he was de-named to the presidency—a spirited debate ensued in Democratic circles about whether he had lost because he was too centrist or too populist. Depressingly, but appropriately, given the privileged position pollsters had come to occupy in a party that now lacked leaders with the confidence to follow their own vision, the positions were laid out by the most famous pollsters who supported each: Stan Greenberg

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produced a poll demonstrating that Gore had been too moderate, and Mark Penn released one showing that populism was the cause of defeat.

THESE POLLS introduced the fourth and most recent phase, of Recrimination and Confusion. Here was Ted Kennedy, calling for a delay or repeal of the Bush tax cut; there was Dick Gephardt, arguing for a Democratic tax cut almost the equal of Bush's; everywhere, or nowhere, was Tom Daschle, mediating but making no leadership decisions. And the bewilderment over what to do about Iraq. Sure, it would have been nice on one level if a majority of Democrats in the Senate had voted against it. But how could they, realistically? The party had no foreign policy of its own to speak of, so they had nothing to offer as a serious alternative.

That happened—and the fight over tax policy happened, and all the other arguments within the party happened—because of this festering and antiquated debate about whether the Democrats should be a liberal party or a centrist party. Afraid to take either point of view too strongly, party leaders end up taking neither, and thereby end up standing for nothing in particular. Why were the Democrats mocked as "the party of prescription drugs" by some commentators after the election? Because it was about the only thing the two sides agreed on: The bill was Zell Miller's, the moderate-to-conservative Georgia Democrat, and it was a concept liberals could support reflexively.

The Democrats will never succeed as either a liberal party or a moderate party. They need to be both (Jesse Jackson used to like to say, "It takes two wings to fly"). The party should be liberal on some matters, aggressively and without apology. It should support universal health care. That is liberalism's great unfinished task, and the party should just be for it (as I write, Al Gore, still mulling a run in 2004, has evidently come out in favor of a Canadian-style, single-player health plan). At the same time, I would argue that the party needs to develop a realistic and imaginative foreign policy, one that pays a greater intellectual debt to Dean Acheson and George Kennan than to Gene McCarthy.

Imaginative: that is the key word. Partisan Democrats, like partisan Republicans, are political people, and political people think in ideological terms first. But it's clear now that more ideological argument is not what the Democrats need. They need imagination. More ideological quarrels will mostly ensure a lot more November nights like the last one. ●

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Requiem for Welfare

Evelyn Z. Brodkin

THERE WERE few mourners at welfare's funeral. In fact, its demise was widely celebrated when congressional Republicans teamed up with a majority of their Democratic colleagues and then-president Bill Clinton to enact a new welfare law in 1996. The law ended the sixty-one-year old federal commitment to aid poor families and ushered in a commitment to lower welfare rolls and put recipients to work.

To many politicians and the public, anything seemed preferable to the widely discredited program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Conservatives were sure that the new welfare would pull up the poor by their bootstraps and redeem them through the virtues of work. Liberals set aside their misgivings, hoping that work would redeem the poor politically and open opportunities to advance economic equality.

More than six years later, the demise of the old welfare remains largely unlamented. But what to make of the changes that have occurred in the name of reform? Often, laws produce more smoke than fire, intimating big change, but producing little. Not this time. In ways both apparent and not fully appreciated, welfare reform has reconfigured both the policy and political landscape. Some of these changes can evoke nostalgia for the bad old days of welfare unreformed.

Reconsidering Welfare's Fate

An immediate consequence of the new law was to defuse welfare as a hot political issue. There's little attention to it these days—apart from some five million parents and children who rely on welfare to alleviate their poverty (and the policy analysts who pore over mountains of data to calculate how it "works"). Legislators have shown no appetite for restarting the welfare wars of prior years. And is it any wonder? The news about welfare has looked good—at least, superficially. Caseloads have plummeted since implementation of the new welfare, dropping 57 percent between 1997 and 2001. Some smaller states essentially cleared their caseloads, with Wyoming and Idaho proudly announcing reductions of 88.9 percent and 85.1 percent, respectively. Even states with large, urban populations have cut caseloads by one-half to three-quarters.

As an issue, welfare ranked among the top five items of interest to the public in 1995 and 1996. But in recent years, it has almost dropped off the Gallup charts. Other polls show that, among respondents who are aware of welfare reform, more than 60 percent think it's working well. Meanwhile, the nation has moved on to other concerns: terrorism, Iraq, the economy. Why reopen the welfare issue now?

In part, the 1996 law itself spurred reassessment. The law was designed to expire in 2002 unless reauthorized by Congress. With Congress unable to reach agreement before the 2002 election, welfare's reauthorization became one of the many measures to get a temporary extension and a handoff to the 108th Congress.

Beyond reauthorization, welfare merits a close look because battles over welfare policy have often been a bellwether of broader political developments. Welfare policy was near the forefront of sixties social activism, one of the banners under which the urban poor, minorities, and other disaffected groups successfully pressed for greater government intervention on behalf of social and economic equality. For the national Democratic Party, the politics of poverty fit an electoral strategy aimed at mobilizing urban and minority voters. Although the ex-

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pansion of welfare proved to be temporary and limited, the politics of poverty produced federal initiatives that had broad and lasting impact, among them Medicaid, food stamps, earned income tax credits, and programs to aid schools in poor communities.

Attacks on welfare marked the beginning of a conservative mobilization against the welfare state in the late 1970s. Lurid accounts in George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* and Mickey Kaus's *The End of Equality* portrayed welfare and the poor as enemies of the democratic marketplace. President Ronald Reagan picked up these themes and contributed his own colorful anecdotes about welfare cheats and fraud, as he pushed forward cuts in taxes and social welfare programs. These forays into the politics of personal piety fit a Republican electoral strategy aimed at mobilizing the religious right and bringing the white working class into the party fold.

Out with the "Old" Welfare

Reforming welfare assumed new urgency in the 1990s, an urgency grounded less in policy realities than in electoral politics. Alarms were sounded about a crisis of cost, although for three decades, spending on AFDC amounted to less than 2 percent of the federal budget. The $16 billion the federal government allocated to AFDC was dwarfed by spending on Social Security and defense, each costing more than $300 billion per year. Public opinion polls, however, indicated a different perception. Forty percent of respondents believed that welfare was one of the most expensive national programs, even larger than Social Security or defense.

Polls also indicated that much of the public believed welfare recipients had it too easy, although few knew what welfare really provided. In fact, AFDC gave only meager support to poor families. In 1996, the median monthly benefit for a family of three was $366. Even when combined with food stamps, welfare lifted few poor families above the federal poverty line. Even the much-touted crisis of dependency ("dependent" being a term loosely applied to anyone receiving welfare) was not reflected in the evidence. The share of families receiving welfare for extended periods declined between 1970 and 1985 and leveled off after that. Families that received welfare for more than six years constituted only a small minority of the welfare caseload at any point in time.

Although the hue and cry over a supposed welfare crisis was greatly overblown, Bill Clinton clearly appreciated welfare's potent political symbolism. As a presidential candidate, he famously pledged to "end welfare as we know it," a turn of phrase useful in demonstrating that he was a "new Democrat" unburdened by the liberalism of his predecessors. His proposals for reform emphasized neoliberal themes of work and individual responsibility, but coupled demands for work with provision of social services intended to improve individual employment prospects. The Clinton administration's plans also assumed the enactment of universal health insurance that would help underwrite the well-being of the working poor. But that did not happen.

After the Republicans took over Congress in 1994, and Clinton began his fateful descent into personal irresponsibility, the initiative shifted decidedly toward the right. House Majority Leader Newt Gingrich seized the opportunity to turn Clinton's pledge against him, sending the president two welfare measures then thought to be so harsh that they almost begged for a veto. The measures ended the federal guarantee of income support, imposed strict work rules, and set time limits on the provision of benefits. Clinton vetoed them.

But on the eve of his renomination at the 1996 Democratic convention, Clinton signed a measure much like those he had vetoed. There followed a few highly public resignations among indignant staff and a rebuke from the Congressional Black Caucus. But Clinton's decision (advocated by strategist Dick Morris and running mate Al Gore, among others) effectively took the welfare issue away from the Republicans and highlighted Clinton's "new Democratic" appeal to critical swing suburban and blue-collar, crossover voters.

Clinton became the first elected Democratic President since Franklin Roosevelt to win a second term. But Clinton was no Roosevelt. In fact, he redeemed his pledge to "end welfare" by presiding over the destruc-

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tion of a pillar of the New Deal welfare state.

Enter the "New" Welfare

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 replaced AFDC with a program aptly named Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). AFDC had provided an open-ended entitlement of federal funds to states based on the amount of benefits they distributed to poor families. TANF ended that entitlement, establishing a five-year block grant fixed at $16.5 billion annually (based on the amount allocated to AFDC in its last year) that states could draw down to subsidize welfare and related expenditures.

Mistrusting the states' willingness to be tough enough on work, Congress incorporated detailed and coercive provisions. First, it set time limits for assistance, restricting federal aid to a lifetime maximum of sixty months. If states wanted to exceed those limits, they would have to pay for most of it themselves. Second, parents were required to work or participate in so-called work activities after a maximum of two years of welfare receipt. Third, TANF established escalating work quotas. States that wanted to collect their full portion of federal dollars would have to show, by 2002, that 50 percent of adults heading single-parent households were working thirty hours per week. Fourth, it meticulously specified those work "activities" that would enable states to meet their quotas, among them paid work, job search, and unpaid workfare (in which recipients "worked off" their welfare benefits at minimum wage or provided child care for other welfare recipients). It limited the use of education and vocational training as countable activities.

Although the "work" side of TANF was clearly pre-eminent, there were some modest provisions on the "opportunity" side, with Congress providing $2.3 billion to help subsidize child care for working mothers and $3 billion in a block grant for welfare-to-work programs.

Beyond these prominent features, the new welfare also packed some hidden punches. It rewarded states for cutting welfare caseloads, largely without regard to how they did it. States that reduced their caseloads (whether those losing welfare found work or not) received credit against officially mandated quotas. If Congress was worried about states' slacking off from its tough work demands, the law indicated no concern that they might go too far in restricting access to benefits or pushing people off the welfare rolls. Only caseload reductions counted.

Under the banner of devolution, the law also gave states new authority to design their own welfare programs. While the welfare debate highlighted the professed virtues of innovation, less obvious was the license it gave states to craft policies even tougher and more restrictive than those allowed by federal law.

Pushing welfare decision making to the state and local level has never been good for the poor. In many states, poor families and their allies have little political influence. Moreover, constitutional balanced-budget requirements make states structurally unsuited to the task of protecting vulnerable residents against economic slumps. When unemployment goes up and state tax revenue goes down, the downward pressure on social spending intensifies.

The secret triumph of devolution lay, not in the opportunities for innovation, but in the opportunity for a quiet unraveling of the safety net.

The Unfolding Story of Welfare Transformed*

What has happened since 1996? For one thing, the new welfare changed a national program of income assistance to an array of state programs, each with its own assortment of benefits, services, restrictions, and requirements. There has always been wide variation in the amount of cash aid states provided, and federal waivers allowed states to deviate from some national rules. But devolution spurred far greater policy inconsistency by allowing states, essentially, to make their own rules. Consequently, what you get (or whether you get anything at all) depends on where you live.

*The discussion in this section draws, in part, on research conducted for the Project on the Public Economy of Work at the University of Chicago, supported by the Ford Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the Open Society Institute. The author and Susan Lambert are co-directors.

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In addition, devolution set off a state "race to the bottom," not by reducing benefit levels as some had predicted, but by imposing new restrictions that limited access to benefits. States across the nation have taken advantage of devolution to impose restrictions tougher than those required by federal law.

For example, although federal law required recipients to work within two years, most states require work within one year, some require immediate work, and others demand a month of job search before they even begin to process an application for assistance. No longer required to exempt mothers with children under three years old from work requirements, most states permit an exemption only for mothers with babies under one year old, and some have eliminated exemptions altogether. In nineteen states, lifetime limits for welfare receipt are set below the federal maximum of sixty months. Other states have imposed so-called family caps that preclude benefits for babies born to mothers already receiving welfare. If federal policymakers secretly hoped that states would do part of the dirty work of cutting welfare for them, they must be pleased with these results.

However, the picture from the states is anything but consistent or uniformly punitive. Many help those recipients accepting low-wage jobs by subsidizing the costs of transportation, child care, and medical insurance (although often only for one year). Twenty-two states try to keep low-wage workers afloat by using welfare benefits to supplement their incomes, "stopping the clock" on time limits for working parents. Significantly, the federal clock keeps ticking, and states adopting this strategy must use their own funds to support working families reaching the five-year lifetime limit. With state budgets increasingly squeezed by recession, it is hard to predict how strong the state commitment to preserve these supports will be.

Many state and local agencies have already cut back work preparation and placement programs funded under a $3 billion federal welfare-to-work block grant. Those funds spurred a short-term boom in contracting to private agencies. But the block grant expired leaving little evidence that states were able to build new systems for supporting work over the long term. In fact, no one knows exactly what all of this contracting produced, as state and local agencies kept limited records and conducted few careful evaluations. A close look at contracting in Illinois, for example, revealed the creation of a diffuse array of short-term programs operating under contract requirements that left many agencies unable to build anything of lasting value.

There is another strange twist to the convoluted welfare story: in their zest for services over support, states actually shifted government funds from the pockets of poor families to the pockets of private service providers. They distributed 76 percent of their AFDC funds in cash aid to the poor in 1996, but gave poor families only 41 percent of their TANF funds in 2000. Substantial portions of the TANF budget were consumed by child care costs, although it is difficult to say exactly how all the TANF funds were used. The General Accounting Office suggests that there is a fair amount of "supplantation" of services previously funded from other budget lines but now paid for by TANF.

Beyond the Caseload Count

The picture becomes still more complicated when one attempts to peer behind the head count in order to assess what actually happened in the purge of welfare caseloads. Exactly how did states push those caseloads down? What has happened to poor families that no longer have recourse to welfare? What kind of opportunities does the lower wage labor market really offer? Research has only begun to illuminate these crucial questions, but the evidence is disheartening.

Finding Good Jobs: There are three ways to lower welfare caseloads. One is by successfully moving recipients into good jobs with stable employment where they can earn enough to maintain their families above poverty (or, at least, above what they could get on welfare). Recipients may find jobs on their own, which many do, or with connections facilitated by welfare agencies and service providers.

Financial supports provided by TANF have allowed some recipients to take jobs where they

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earn too little to make ends meet on their own. Child-care and transportation subsidies make a difference for those workers. They also benefit from federally funded food stamps that stretch the grocery budget. But food stamp use fell off 40 percent after 1994, although fewer families were receiving welfare and more had joined the ranks of the working poor. Absent external pressures, most states made no effort to assure access to food stamps for those losing welfare. In fact, government studies indicate that administrative hassles and misinformation discouraged low-income families from obtaining benefits.

Taking Bad Jobs: A second way to lower welfare caseloads is to pressure recipients into taking bad jobs. Not all lower wage jobs are bad, but many of those most readily available to former recipients undermine their best efforts to make it as working parents. These jobs are characterized by unstable schedules, limited access to health insurance or pensions, no sick leave, and job insecurity. Because high turnover is a feature of these jobs, at any given moment, many are apt to be available. Indeed, employers seeking to fill these undesirable "high-velocity" jobs, where there is continuous churning of the workforce, are all too eager to use welfare agencies as a hiring hall.

This may partially explain why more than a fifth of those leaving welfare for work return within a year or two. Proponents of the new welfare conveniently blame individual work behavior or attitudes for job churning, but ignore the role of employers who structure jobs in ways that make job loss inevitable. What's a supermarket clerk to do when her manager makes frequent schedule changes, periodically shortens her hours, or asks her to work in a store across town? What happens is that carefully constructed child care arrangements break down, lost pay days break the family budget, and the hours it takes to commute on public transportation become unmanageable. The family-friendly workplace that more sought-after workers demand couldn't be farther from the hard reality of lower wage jobs.

One of the little appreciated virtues of the old welfare is that it served as a sort of unemployment insurance for these lower wage workers excluded from regular unemployment insurance by their irregular jobs. Welfare cushioned the layoffs, turnover, and contingencies that go with the territory. Under the new welfare, these workers face a hard landing because welfare is more difficult to get and offers little leeway to acquire either the time or skills that might yield a job with a future. Over the longer term, low-wage workers may find their access to welfare blocked by time limits. Although the five-year lifetime limit ostensibly targets sustained reliance on welfare, this limit could come back to bite those who cycle in and out of the lower wage labor force. At this point, no one knows how this will play out.

Creating Barriers to Access: A third way to reduce welfare caseloads is by reducing access—making benefits harder to acquire and keep. Some states explicitly try to divert applicants by imposing advance job-search requirements, demanding multiple trips to the welfare office in order to complete the application process, or informally advising applicants that it may not be worth the hassle. In some welfare offices, caseworkers routinely encourage applicants to forgo cash aid and apply only for Medicaid and food stamps.

Benefits are also harder to keep, as caseworkers require recipients to attend frequent meetings either to discuss seemingly endless demands for documentation or to press them on issues involving work. Everyday life in an urban welfare office is difficult to describe and, for many, even harder to believe. There are the hours of waiting in rows of plastic chairs, the repeated requests for paperwork, the ritualized weekly job club lectures about how to smile, shake hands, and show a good attitude to employers. As inspiration, caseworkers leading job club sessions often tell stories from their own lives of rising from poverty to become welfare workers (positions likely to be cut back as caseloads decline). When clients tell their own tales of cycling from bad jobs to worse and ask for help getting a good job, caseworkers are apt to admonish them for indulging in a "pity party."

Access to welfare may also be constrained through a profoundly mundane array of administrative barriers that simply make benefits harder to keep. A missed appointment, mis-

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placed documents (often lost by the agency), delayed entry of personal data—these common and otherwise trivial mishaps can result in a loss of benefits for "non-cooperation."

The Public Benefits Hotline, a call-in center that provides both advice and intervention for Chicago residents, received some ten thousand calls in the four years after welfare reform, most of them involving hassles of this sort.* In other parts of the country, these types of problems show up in administrative hearing records and court cases, where judges have criticized welfare agencies for making "excessive" demands for verification documents, conducting "sham assessments" leading to inappropriate imposition of work requirements, and sanctioning clients for missing appointments when they should have helped them deal with child care or medical difficulties.

Is There a Bottom Line?

The new welfare has produced neither the immediate cataclysm its opponents threatened nor the economic and social redemption its proponents anticipated. Opponents had warned that welfare reform would plunge one million children into poverty. In the midst of an unprecedented economic boom, that didn't happen. But, even in the best of times, prospects were not auspicious for those leaving welfare.

According to the Urban Institute, about half of those leaving welfare for work between 1997 and 1999 obtained jobs where they earned a median hourly wage of only $7.15. If the jobs offered a steady forty hours of work a week (which lower wage jobs usually don't), that would provide a gross annual income of $14,872. That places a mother with two children a precarious $1,000 above the formal poverty line for the year 2000 and a two-parent family with two children nearly $3,000 *below* that line. But more than one-fifth of those leaving welfare for work didn't make it through the year—either because they lost their jobs, got sick, or just couldn't make ends meet. The only thing surprising about these figures is that the numbers weren't higher. Others left or lost welfare, but did not find work, with one in seven adults losing welfare reporting no alternative means of support. Their specific fate is unknown, but most big cities have been reporting worrisome increases in homelessness and hunger.

If there is any bottom line, it is that caseloads have been purged. But neither the market for lower wage workers nor the policies put into practice in the name of welfare reform have purged poverty from the lives of the poor. Even in the last years of the economic boom, between 1996 and 1998, the Urban Institute found that three hundred thousand more individuals in single-parent families slipped into extreme poverty. Although they qualified for food stamps that might have stretched their resources a bit further, many did not get them. Government figures indicate that families leaving welfare for work often lose access to other benefits, which states do not automatically continue irrespective of eligibility.

More recently, census figures have begun to show the effects of recession coupled with an eroded safety net. The nation's poverty rate rose to 11.7 percent in 2001, up from 11.3 percent the prior year. More troubling still, inequality is growing and poverty is deepening. In 2001, the "poverty gap," the gap between the official poverty line and the income of poor individuals, reached its highest level since measurements were first taken in 1979. In California, often a harbinger of larger social trends, a startling two in three poor children now live in families where at least one adult is employed. Can the families of lower wage workers live without access to welfare and other government supports? Apparently, they can live, but not very well.

Slouching Toward Reauthorization

"We have to remember that the goal of the reform program was not to get people out of poverty, but to achieve financial independence, to get off welfare." This statement by a senior Connecticut welfare official quoted in the *New York Times* is more candid than most. But it illustrates the kind of political rationale that policymakers use to inoculate themselves

*The Hotline is a collaborative effort of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago and community antipoverty advocates.

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against factual evidence of the new welfare's failure to relieve poverty.

With TANF facing reauthorization in the fall of 2002, it was clear that reconsideration of welfare policy would take place on a new playing field. Tough work rules, time limits, and devolution were just the starting point. The Bush administration advanced a reauthorization plan that increased work requirements, cut opportunities for education and training, added new doses of moralism, and extended devolution.

The Republican-controlled House passed a TANF reauthorization bill (later deferred by the Senate) requiring recipients to work forty hours a week and demanding that states enforce these requirements for 70 percent of families receiving welfare by 2007. The bill also created incentives for states to require work within a month of granting welfare benefits and continued to credit states for caseload reductions, regardless of whether families losing welfare had jobs that could sustain them.

Families would face harsh new penalties, simply for running afoul of administrative rules. The House-passed measure required states to impose full family sanctions if caseworkers find a recipient in violation of those rules for sixty days. This makes entire families vulnerable to losing aid if a parent misses a couple of appointments or gets tangled in demands to supply documents verifying eligibility, just the type of problem that crops up routinely in states with complicated rules and outdated record-keeping systems.

One of the least mentioned but most dangerous features of the House bill was a "superwaiver" that would allow the executive branch to release states from social welfare obligations contained in more than a dozen federal poverty programs, including not only TANF, but also food stamps and Medicaid. This stealth provision would allow the Bush administration to override existing legislation by fiat. The nominal justification for the superwaiver is that it would ease the path of state innovation and experimentation. It would also ease the path for state cuts in social programs beyond all previous experience.

A more visibly contentious feature of the House bill was a provision to spend $300 million dollars per year on programs to induce welfare recipients to marry. This provision is one of the favorites of the religious right, along with the administration's funding for faith-based social services. These moral redemption provisions may be more important for what they signify to the Republican Party's conservative base than for what they do, as many states have resisted these types of things in the past. However, on this point, it is irresistible to quote America's favorite president, the fictional President Josiah Bartlet of the television series *West Wing*, who quipped: "When did the government get into the yenta business?"

Of Poverty, Democracy, and Welfare

The demise of the old welfare marked more than an end to a policy that many believed had outlived its usefulness. It also marked the end of welfare *politics* as we knew it. In the tepid debate over reauthorization in the fall of 2002, the bitter conflicts of earlier years over government's role in addressing poverty were replaced by half-hearted tinkering. Even provisions with the potential to induce hand-to-hand combat—such as those on marriage or the superwaiver—elicited relatively low-intensity challenges.

Is this because the new welfare yielded the benefits that liberals had hoped for, removing a contentious issue from the table and conferring legitimation on the poor, not as recipients, but as workers? Did it satisfy conservatives by clearing caseloads and demanding work? That does not seem to be the case.

If the poor have benefited from a new legitimacy, it is hard to see the rewards. Congress has not rushed to offer extensive new work supports. In fact, the House bill contained $8 to $10 billion less for work supports than the Congressional Budget Office estimated would be needed. In 2002, Congress couldn't even agree to extend unemployment insurance for those outside the welfare system who were felled by recession, corporate collapses, and the high-tech slide. While conservatives celebrated the caseload count, they also savored the opportunity to raise the ante with more onerous work requirements and marriage inducements, and even made a bid to eliminate other social protections through the superwaiver.

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In the aftermath of the November 2002 election, a conservative consolidation of power was in the air. In a televised interview with Jim Lehrer, Republican spokesman Grover Norquist dared Democrats to take on the welfare issue. "If the Democrats want to stand up against welfare reform, let them! Two years from now, they'll be in even worse shape in the Senate elections."

Some congressional Democrats did take tentative steps against the tide, suggesting provisions that would fund new welfare-to-work services, provide additional job subsidies, increase the child care allotment, provide alternatives to work for recipients categorized as having work "barriers," and restore benefits to legal immigrants who were cut from welfare in 1996. Maryland Representative Benjamin Cardin was chief sponsor of a bill suggesting that states should be held accountable, not only for caseload reduction, but for poverty reduction. This notion had little traction in the 107th Congress and is likely to have even less in the next. Without the foundation of a politics of poverty to build on, such laudable ideas seem strangely irrelevant, even to the Democrats' agenda.

If welfare is a bellwether of broader political developments, there's little mistaking which way the wind is blowing. It has a decidedly Dickensian chill. The politics of poverty that gave birth to the old welfare has been supplanted by the politics of personal piety that gave birth to the new. This reflects a convergence between a neoliberal agenda of market dominance and a neoconservative agenda of middle-class moralism. In this reconfigured politics, personal responsibility is code for enforcement of the market. The new Calvinism advanced by welfare policy treats inequality as a natural consequence of personal behavior and attitude in an impartial marketplace. It is consistent with a shift in the role of the state from defender of the vulnerable and buffer against the market to one of protector-in-chief of both market and morals. This shift does not favor a small state, but a different state, one capable of enforcing market demands on workers, responding to corporate demands for capital (through public subsidies, bailouts, and tax breaks), and, perhaps more symbolically, regulating morality.

Welfare policy neither created, nor could prevent, these developments. Nor is it a foregone conclusion that government will shirk its social responsibilities. After all, America's growing economic inequality is fundamentally at odds with its commitment to political equality.

In contrast to the United States, the policies of Western European countries suggest that there need not be an absolute conflict between the welfare state and the market. Despite their allegiance to the latter, other nations continue to offer greater social protection to their citizens and worry about the democratic consequences of excluding the disadvantaged from the economy and the polity. U.S. policymakers need to move past stale debates pitting work against welfare and the poor against the nonpoor, if they are to advance policies that promote both social inclusion and economic opportunity.

Welfare, though small in scope, is large in relevance because it is a place where economic, social, and political issues converge. The old welfare acknowledged, in principle, a political commitment to relieve poverty and lessen inequality, even if, in practice, that commitment was limited, benefits were ungenerous, and access uneven. The new welfare dramatically changed the terms of the relationship between disadvantaged citizens and their state. It devolved choices about social protection from the State to the states, and it placed the value of work over the values of family well-being and social equity. As bad as the old welfare may have been, there is reason to lament its demise after all. ●

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Whose Elephant?

Civic Nationalism and the Left

Jim Sleeper

THE QUESTION of the left's relationship to American patriotism brings to mind the story about a European intellectual émigré who, discovering the Bronx Zoo, wrote an essay on "The Elephant and the Jewish Question." The left, a kind of borderless people with an international agenda, probably has had more to do with Jews, another borderless people, than with the elephant of American patriotism. The two wandering "peoples" overlap politically and demographically: more leftist thought than we acknowledge is a secularized variant of the original Jewish idea of history-making through covenantal and messianic redemption—a thundering of God in the world, through human agency. Surely a disproportionate number of the left's thinkers and leaders, starting with Karl Marx, fled their ancestral Jewish burden of chosenness in history by secularizing it. Don't tell me there was no "chosen" people in the vanguard of the proletariat and no messianism in Marxism.

Jewish and leftist strains have converged even more on American soil, where the original, Hebraic themes were sown by Puritans who literally believed themselves to be the new people of Israel, building a New Jerusalem in a New Canaan. Soon enough, of course, theocratic Puritanism had to coexist with "liberal" natural-rights thinking that slowly eclipsed it—and a good thing, too. But try to explain the power of abolitionism, Abraham Lincoln's rhetoric, or the social gospel, populist, Progressive, suffragist, civil rights, and other social movements without acknowledging that the Hebraic covenantal and prophetic nationalist strains in Puritanism have driven American reform through Protestant inflections and Enlightenment crosscurrents.

No wonder that one of Western history's fault lines since 1917 has been a clash of two world-historical vanguards: Marx's (and V.I. Lenin's and Lev Bronstein Trotsky's) triumphalist, scientific rendering of Hebraic myths and Woodrow Wilson's triumphalist, American rendering of the same myths. Remember Ronald Reagan's invocation of the Puritan "City on a Hill" against the Soviet "evil empire"? Even now, a tenth-generation descendant of New England Puritans has counterposed the New Jerusalem against some of old Jerusalem's Abrahamic claimants, revivifying their Great American Satan. No doubt, "the Jewish Question," the left question, and the elephant of American patriotism remain fatefully and confusingly entwined. No doubt, more than a few of us have missed this.

Let me probe the confusion by sketching a "prophetic" instance of American patriotism I witnessed one wintry morning in 1968 while plodding across Yale's Beinecke Plaza to a class. As I passed some fellow undergraduates gathered around the university chaplain, William Sloane Coffin, Jr., a senior was speaking, barely audibly, trying to find his voice against fear. "The government claims we're criminals," he said, as I leaned in to listen, "but we say it is the government that is criminal in waging this war." He and two others handed Coffin draft cards, like those we all had in our wallets, refusing conscription into the Vietnam War.

Coffin was there to *bless,* in an American civic idiom that few leftists or liberals comprehend, a courage that few on the right comprehend. "Believe me," he said, "I know what it's like to wake up in the morning feeling like a sensitive grain of wheat lookin' at a millstone." It was Calvinist humor, jaunty in its defiance of the powers that be on behalf of a higher power, and some of us grasped at that ray of

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hope, because we were scared. For all we knew, these guys were about to be arrested, and we felt arrested morally by their example. A few yards away, the names of hundreds of Yale men who had perished in wars were inscribed on marble walls near sculpted Periclean citizen-warriors under such admonitions as "Courage disdains fame and wins it." The resisters were challenging us to join them in disdaining fame, but with scant prospect of even a memorial's posthumous regard.

Yet something in their bearing made them heroically "American," as free of anything *anti*-American as was Rosa Parks when she refused to move to the back of a bus. The dignity in her protest helped redeem even a racist civil society, reconstituting it instead of trashing it as inherently damned. Now the Yale students were resisting the government in the name of a society that they, too, were reconstituting by pledging their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. It was as if civic spirit had arisen from a long slumber and was breathing and walking again, re-moralizing the state and the law. And as we watched, the confusion we were feeling gave way to something like awe.

"The great glory of American democracy is the right to protest for right," Martin Luther King, Jr. had said twelve years before. And the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas marveled at the "constitutional patriotism" of Americans who drew their strength to confront the state not from nationalist fantasies of racial and ethnic destiny but from a civic-nationalist commingling of religious passion and Enlightenment principle. But could a republic relying so heavily on civic virtue, borne by such crosscurrents, endure? Before sixties' nostalgia clouds the answer, let me complicate it by suggesting that constitutional patriots might include civilly disobedient but peaceful anti-abortion activists who believe that life is a continuous, sacred thread, not to be broken by the state or by individuals exercising their "rights." You may loathe these activists as conservatives did those who opposed the Vietnam War. But the test of constitutional patriotism is whether you can respect those who accept legal punishment to strengthen their dissent.

Civic discipline like that may seem dowdy or foolish to champions of higher materialist or salvific truths and to their writerly cheerleaders, radiant mainly with a desire to be radiant. But there are strains of Hebrew prophecy and obligation to law in these humbler acts of witness, as well as Enlightenment wisdom about individuality and liberty, and a dose of realpolitik. This civic patriotism has freed more people in the past century than all exclusively ideological and religious crusades combined. The confessional nationalism of Polish Solidarity liberated more people than had any progressive passion for justice alone or any conservative passion for honor alone. More than a few of us have missed this, too, by misconstruing the religious dimensions of civic nationalism.

THE "LEFT" and the "right" are no longer vessels of hope. That became obvious in the 2000 presidential primaries as conservative flag-wavers scrambled to discredit an American war hero who charged that their global capitalist "iron triangle" of big money, bad lobbyists, and undemocratic legislation was debasing the country. Liberals and some leftists cast shy, admiring glances at John McCain's insurgency, which seemed to confirm what the philosopher Richard Rorty had insisted on a few years before: national pride is as vital as individual self-respect to winning social justice. The left, Rorty argued, has forgotten how to keep American pride on the sound footing set by Eugene V. Debs, A. Philip Randolph, and others who were anything but conservatives. They found the United States exceptional not because it is racially superior or divinely blessed but because it enhances democratic prospects by mixing Puritan moral passion with Enlightenment principle.

That takes some doing, and arguably the experiment is coming undone. But not quite as some on the left have spent twenty years insisting: American liberal-democratic capitalism has proved more protean, supple, and absorptive than even its staunchest defenders predicted in reducing the racism and sexism that dominate the leftist moral imagination. The harder challenges are the atomization and degradation of public life, driven by a corporate "culture" of consumer marketing ever more relentless and intrusive. The left has produced varied, sometimes brilliant diagnoses of it, but

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a diagnosis is not a prescription. A politics that stirred and sustained public support would have to rescue the idea of civic nationalism, as McCain tried to, from both materialist and racialist misconstruals of patriotism. (McCain never mentioned race; his adopted Bangladeshi daughter was always there at the podium, and that said enough.)

Will American leftists ever make headway in such efforts? Not until we stop trying to impose the left-vs.-right floor plan of the nineteenth-century French Chamber of Deputies on American politics. And not before we've reckoned more honestly with our own roots—and America's—in a Hebraic national project, de-territorialized for two millennia, that has been such a leaven to other societies. This is no place to reprise the rise of the Zionist territorial experiment, reborn in a Europe awash in "blood and soil" nationalism; what concerns me here is the influence of a de-territorialized, Jewish national mission on both the left and the American nation, which is itself also multinational and transnational.

Start with nationalism and its discontents. Citing compelling evidence, leftists have rebuffed national identities as shills or shells for warring capitalist elites who wield myths of blood, soil, and state to tighten their grip on the rest of us. (Such evidence was ignored when Russian nationalism infected the idea of "socialism in one country" or when third world "national liberation fronts" proclaimed themselves bearers of global justice. The root of some leftists' credulity was guilt and self-loathing as Americans or as European imperialists.) But national identity does bear strengths that should be recognized apart from its "imagined communities" of blood, soil and imperial triumph. It should be rescued as well from the "imagined vacuities" of professedly more cosmopolitan, postnationalist critics who consider all nationalism atavistic.

The political philosopher Martha Nussbaum, for instance, warns that an "emphasis on patriotic pride is both morally dangerous and ultimately subversive of some of the worthy . . . moral ideas of justice and equality." In liberal-universalist terms, she's right: We can't draw territorial lines around one people and say that only here will we protect rights we claim are universal. Yet that paradox is a fact of life. Just as each individual, while the bearer of a universal Kantian dignity, must fulfill it within an idiosyncratic body and biography, so too must groups, without whose shared but distinctive cultural referents our individual odysseys would have no communicable meaning. There is a necessary oscillation between the universal and the parochial. "We are not born equal," Hannah Arendt admonished universalists; "we become equal as members of a group on the strength of our decision to guarantee ourselves equal rights" through politics, by recognizing one another as consociates who enter into a civil society and induct our young into it. It does take a village to raise a child.

But why a nation? The answer that endures may be more anthropological than economic: Only nations are large and diverse enough to affirm what's universal, yet are grounded in real communities where young people are socialized into moral compacts. Only a nation can sustain a liberal-democratic polity that, in turn, can enforce the commitments it nourishes. Ethnic and racial subgroups in diverse societies can't do that. The United Nations is too broad for it, too much a confluence of elites and transnational abstractions. Even more so are the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. Nations have at least potentially the motivation to be what the Latin economist Hernando de Soto calls "the skin of the poor," vindicating the universal in a republican jurisprudence that can sometimes enforce decency, even if not fellow-feeling, on the rich.

The problem here—but also the irony in leftist rejections of nationalism as a capitalist tool—is that truly *global* capitalist elites, who are yet another people without borders, don't care much about nationalism these days. Their technological and economic innovations are scrambling old borders and populations, opening new "imagined communities" where ideas and experiences are exchanged at the speed of light. Like the old internationalist left, global capitalists consider nationalism a defensive reaction to these shifts, a flush on the cheek of a dying age.

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But a nation can also sustain a necessary balance of universal rights and a citizenship that vindicates them in institutions subject to democratic control. The transnational European Union may be able to do that, too. But the American nation, the progenitor of many of the global-capitalist forces that have brought the EU into being, is the crucible of the politics needed to control global capitalism, and partly for reasons that take us back to those old Hebrew myths. Although the United States has often been a rolling synthesis of forces no one could control, lately it seems a *riot* of forces that threaten to dissolve the republic. Its ethos of capitalist property-making has broken loose from John Locke's Hebrew/Protestant covenant, and it is running roughshod over honorable conservative notions of political sovereignty: the "culture" of corporate consumer marketing measures out individuality and freedom in the slender power it gives consumers over purchases at the mall.

Only a national security state or global empire could even pretend to protect such a slippery web of contracts and negative "rights." But a state like that would chill the civic-republican ethos that literary historian Daniel Aaron has characterized as "ethical and pragmatic, disciplined and free." Some of us learned its norms of sportsmanship, reasoned argument, and tolerance in the folkways, friendships, and rites of passage of republican (small "r") training grounds—after-hours schools, youth programs, summer camps, and other institutions set up deliberately to deepen civic attachments. Some of them drew consciously on the old Puritan/Hebraic legacies as well as on Enlightenment affirmations. (So did my New England Yankee public schoolmarms, but they and their policies have passed out of the culture and even the law.) Institutions like these made Jimmy Stewart's *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington* credible to a young Bill Bradley, John McCain, Mario Cuomo, or even a Rudolph Giuliani. Do they still? We have always had riotous, corrupt, and imperial politics, but never so much silence, civic demoralization, and voter abstention. The collapse of the World Trade Center towers, although caused by external forces, seems emblematic of the implosion of other pillars of civil society in corporate and even church governance, in standards of decency and civility in public places. What George Orwell called the "prolecult" of mass entertainment is ever more gladiatorial, accelerating the calculations of force and fraud in daily life. The degradation of upper-middle-class morals and manners, from road rage to compulsive body building, suggests a *sauve qui peut*, "every man for himself" stance toward a society no one trusts anymore.

The civil rights movement would have been inconceivable without its ability to rely on some of the older society's supposedly hypocritical conventions: Rosa Parks upheld some of them as she challenged others. But corporate marketing is dissolving them all by shuffling the old racial and libidinal decks indiscriminately, "liberating" us only into anomic meanness: in the studios of television tell-all circuses and show trials, blacks and whites vent their despair together in perfect equality. Indian "tribes," some concocted by activist-entrepreneurs and investor-friendly officials, use their sovereignty to set up casinos that, in a bitter poetic justice, hook busloads of flaccid, despairing whites on gambling as surely as whites hooked Indians on firewater. And the left, flummoxed by its racialist fantasies as surely as conservatives are by free-market idolatry, finds itself speechless about the addictive, regressive tax of casino gambling. The general descent is accelerated by journalism's collapse into the tentacles of entertainment conglomerates that assemble any big audience for profit on any pretext: ironically, then-Time-Warner CEO Gerald Levin's son was murdered by a young aficionado of the gangster rap the elder Levin was pumping into the Bronx.

If I sound like an old Roman citizen echoing Cicero's lament that we are too ill to bear our sicknesses or their cures, it's because I foresee for America neither the Soviet-style totalitarianism of conservatives' nightmares nor the fascism of the left's fevered imagination, but a dissolution such as ancient Rome's. Edward Gibbons's accounts of it leap off the page. But lamenting the rise of "Empire" and the End of Days can be perversely comforting to the insulated, speeding their abdications of public responsibility. Better to regenerate civil soci-

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ety after recalling how it was generated in the first place. Doing so would return us to the irony I began with: Indispensable though the Enlightenment is to this country, one can't know it well without reckoning, even as an unbeliever, with the Hebrew and Protestant legacies that have shaped its politics and could temper its capitalism.

Anti-capitalism isn't enough. Religious strands in American liberalism trace back beyond capitalism to the cautionary biblical stories of the golden calf and of a garden, a serpent, and a corruptible couple of humans. James Russell Lowell captured this country's expectations of long, twilight struggles with evil: "Truth forever on the scaffold; wrong forever on the throne/ Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown/ standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own." Quietistic, it isn't: Every so often, God looses the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword, so that even in 1963 Martin Luther King could stir millions by crying, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!" and in 1968 William Sloane Coffin, Jr., could sacralize students' courage against what seemed overwhelming odds. When Reagan assailed the "evil empire," the left heard only a rigid cold war ideology. But more Americans heard sounds of an old battle between Old World tyranny and an America they think chosen for great things.

That battle probably continues even in the dim but filopietistic mind of George W. Bush. Even if you dismiss him and Reagan, look into what drives people as different as Joseph Lieberman, John Ashcroft, and those who are producing five thousand new owner-occupied "Nehemiah" homes in "hopeless" inner-city New York through church-based power organizations working with the Saul Alinsky-inspired Industrial Areas Foundation. Learn that these homes are named for the biblical leader who convinced his despondent neighbors to rebuild Jerusalem, and start to understand your country. And admit that the Marxist left has mostly been some other country. Such organizing succeeds because it relies on what the political scientist Rogers Smith calls "a story of American identity that goes beyond abstract defenses of democracy and human rights . . . . There is no realistic escape from the task of seeking to define a morally defensible conception of American peoplehood. . ."

Smith resists religious ingredients, but for the Nehemiah builders, American civic strength relies on balancing *a general expectation of religious faith without any imposition of doctrine*. There is a genius in this that conservatives understand but abuse and that Marxists and some liberals haven't grasped: We nonbelievers find far better protection in the interstices of a balance between the Enlightenment of Locke and the Lord of the Covenant than we would in some postmodernist free-for all, which would really be a Hobbesian free-for-none.

EXPECTING FAITH without imposing doctrine is only the beginning of the American struggle. No would-be organizer should miss Michael Gecan's new book *Going Public*, which describes the Nehemiah project and kindred efforts in intimate, smartly conceptualized detail. Gecan tracks the evolution and entanglements of three public cultures—market, bureaucratic, and relational or voluntary. In American society generally, however, the dynamic market culture isn't just more sovereign than in the past; it's out of control. Restoring civil society would require reconfiguring the supposed civil rights of fictive conglomerate "persons" that exercise their "free speech rights" to take over public and private life but crush citizens' rights on the turf they've usurped. No honorable conservatism can defend that. Nor can it pretend to affirm American sovereignty without asserting it over tax shelters in the Cayman Islands that shift huge corporate tax burdens onto Americans who fight our wars. Let hothouse-bred mini-cons at magazines and think tanks go to work for large, bureaucratic corporate purveyors of dubious services and entertainments, our own Bermuda Triangles of public sovereignty and personal freedom. Maybe then they will pledge their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to reform corporate practices that degrade the civic virtue they claim is a fundament of liberty.

More than a few leftists, too, may need Maoist-style rehabilitation in corporate workplaces. Instead of huddling in a few cozy neigh-

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borhoods and posturing before undergraduates and imagined communities of magazine readers, let them work awhile for large, bureaucratic corporations (not just drop by "on assignment" for glossy magazines). They might learn how to balance conservative cultural and religious strengths with liberal opportunities. Instead of opposing every civic expectation of religious faith, they might join religious activists in wielding faith as a counterweight to corporate tyranny. And they might discover that, as the political philosopher Michael Sandel put it, "Fundamentalists rush in where liberals fear to tread." Now that the post-9/11 world has taught us how potent cultural "differences" really are, maybe some leftists who've championed them uncritically will admit they kept quiet about their own ethnic and religious identities because they valued their Enlightenment-liberal "rights" to self-definition more than they did communal belonging. They, too, now need a better American balance between ethnic roots and civic forums, between Hebraic covenants and Enlightenment freedoms.

I am not urging religious belief here but more respect for it as a civic wellspring. We can restrain it constitutionally without censuring it as roundly as we tend to do now. Precisely because the United States is even more diverse than any Census color-coding or Ford Foundation ethnic corralling comprehends, we should be working harder to forge a few republican/civic bonds. Neither left nor right do it credibly now, not least because leftists in flight from their own true origins can't understand the American elephant any better than did that émigré at the Bronx Zoo. ●

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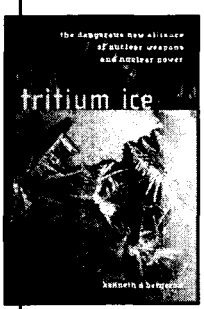

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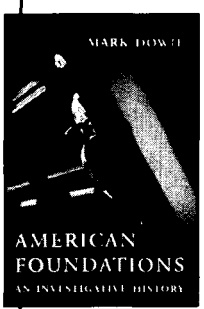

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Private Lives, Public Spaces

The Surveillance State

Molly Smithsimon

"You may be caught on camera ten times a day. Are you dressed for it?"
—Kenneth Cole advertisement

IF YOU LIKED *Survivor*, just imagine a new reality-based television show that captures New Yorkers in their most intimate public moments. You'd see politicians' daughters buying drugs in Tompkins Square Park, topless tanning in Central Park, and CEOs stumbling out of midtown bars after having a few too many. Why not? In a culture like ours that thrives on voyeuristic thrills, the show would no doubt be a hit. Viewers in the United Kingdom were treated to a compilation of "juicy bits" from government closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras when Barrie Goulding launched *Caught in the Act*. The program featured the sexual and other intimate activities of innocent people as well as lawbreakers. Great Britain, the spawning ground of reality television, has 1.5 million television cameras monitoring the public, more than any other nation, but the United States is rapidly catching up.

Thousands of cameras, both publicly and privately owned, dot city streets and parks. Once someone has gone out in public, courts have refused to recognize any expectation of privacy from being watched on camera, either by private (in tort law) or government (under the Fourth Amendment) actors. But people are, by and large, unaware that they are being watched. Nor do they know or control what their images are being used for. The problem is compounded by the potential use of facial recognition technology to compare the faces of people who simply step into public places with the database images of suspects and convicted criminals, an action that in other forms would require probable cause. Law enforcement's track record of disproportionately targeting racial and ethnic minorities, combined with the high rate of false positive matches, makes it likely that innocent people will be arrested without any independent justification.

Electronic surveillance has sent a detectable chill through our public spaces. The first clause of the Fourth Amendment declares, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated." A faithful reading allows a reasonable expectation of freedom from searching scrutiny of one's person, papers and effects wherever one is, including outside on public streets and in parks. No case has squarely faced this issue, and the current Supreme Court would likely find that electronic monitoring of public areas is not a search subject to Fourth Amendment scrutiny. Chief Justice William Rehnquist has made clear his views that law enforcement interests will generally trump any limited right to privacy while out in public. However, if the Court adopted a more honest test, it would recognize the distinction between what is actually in plain view (and hence reasonable to observe) and what is capable of being seen if technology is trained on the public in ways it doesn't and shouldn't expect.

No unreasonable search occurs when a beat police officer glances around or even stops to survey passersby. But when law enforcement films the public engaging in all the activities of mundane existence, the government crosses the line. Even more invasive is taping video footage, using nightscopes, and using biometric technology to analyze the faces or carriage of presumptively innocent citizens to find matches with criminal suspects. Biometric technology, which has been piloted in Tampa, Florida; in airports in Boston, Providence, San

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Francisco, and Fresno; and at checkpoints at the U.S.-Mexico border, may appear to be a "perfect search" because it is supposed to single out only known offenders. But in reality, the rate of error vastly exceeds accurate matches.

Electronic Eyes

As part of the 1998 New York Civil Liberties Union Surveillance Camera Project, volunteers walked every block in Manhattan and found 2,397 publicly and privately controlled cameras trained on public spaces. The thickest concentrations are in midtown, the financial district, in lower Manhattan parks, and around housing projects. In one eight-block radius alone, volunteers noted three hundred cameras. But there are likely many thousands more because of the routine security practice of buttressing visible cameras with concealed ones "so everything's covered and it doesn't look like a fortress," a consultant told the *Village Voice* (Sept. 30–Oct. 6, 1999). Public cameras are typically mounted on traffic and streetlight poles, public buildings, and trees and installed in buses, on subway platforms, and inside subway cars. The full extent of saturation isn't known, because police officials refuse to divulge their locations, claiming that it would undermine law enforcement's effectiveness, and besides, the majority of cameras are nongovernmental, owned by countless private companies.

Bill Brown, founder of the privacy watchdog group The Surveillance Camera Players, gives walking tours of New York City surveillance camera locations. He estimates there are about six thousand cameras in Manhattan. He noted some of the questions, constitutional and commercial, raised by an unmarked camera. "In addition to watching the front door, it's also pointing out into public space and recording information about the passersby: Who are they with? What are they wearing? What are they smoking? Are they drinking Coca-Cola or Pepsi?"

Penetrating Stares

A number of factors make an electronic eye inherently more intrusive than direct observation by a human being. Law professor and legal columnist Sherry Colb notes that you can't stare back to discourage the privacy incursion. Nor can you choose to move away from the area under surveillance if you don't know where it is. People behave differently when they think they are alone. As Tampa police-camera operator Raymond Green told the *St. Petersburg Times*: "Some things are really funny, like the way people dance when they think no one's looking." On the other hand, even if people are aware of the cameras, this does not alleviate the problems. As Colb signals, awareness that we are being watched by surveillance cameras can put us in a "constant state of apprehension and self-consciousness whenever we are out in public." Sociologist Steven Flusty aptly calls this monitored public space "jittery space." Rather than promoting the ideals of a democratic society, it creates a police state environment that chills the exercise of First Amendment rights and further polarizes race relations.

Police officers have long singled out African-Americans and other people of color for mistreatment. Camera operators may be even more likely to target members of stigmatized social groups for monitoring when the public can't see them. From a control room it's easier to single one person out, and it's less noticeable. Colb identifies targeting as a secondary, but important, privacy harm. When a person is singled out by police with no legitimate basis, he or she is left asking, "What made them think I'm a criminal?"

Criminologists Clive Norris and Gary Armstrong answer that question in their study of CCTV monitoring in Great Britain. In the absence of concrete guidance on whom to monitor, "CCTV operators selectively target those social groups they believe most likely to be deviant." The most over-represented characteristics of those scrutinized were maleness, youth, and blackness. Operators also focused on anyone running or loitering, even though this rarely led to finding criminal conduct (of course, disorderly conduct also attracted the operator's attention); anyone who appeared to be spatially or temporally out of place—the most obvious being drunks, beggars, the homeless and street vendors; people whose clothing style signaled they were trouble-makers; people who challenged the authority of the camera to

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watch them; and people who seemed to be trying to conceal their identity. Norris and Armstrong found that nearly four out of ten people were monitored for "no obvious reason."

Cameras do not merely serve the purpose of an automated beat cop, contrary to courts' assumptions. They are more like super cops. Video feeds can be linked to a nationwide or international database to scan for matches with criminal suspects (though thus far such efforts have faltered because facial recognition software is so imperfect). Images can be enhanced far beyond the visual capabilities of a human being. The cameras can view faces a hundred yards away, see in the dark with infrared technology, and zoom in to read a letter someone is holding, which police couldn't do without probable cause. Furthermore, they can be placed in a position where a person couldn't be, such as high up on a wall.

The potential for abuse is considerable: the technology could easily be used for sexual voyeurism, racial profiling, or to harass gays, lesbians, and transgendered people. Unlike the eye simply catching a fleeting glance of an embarrassing moment, the camera makes it permanent and possible to disseminate widely. The *Detroit Free Press* found that Detroit officers used the video database of the Law Enforcement Information Network to help themselves or their friends stalk women, threaten motorists after road rage incidents involving the police as drivers, and intimidate supporters of political rivals.

In weighing the intrusiveness of cameras, courts suggest comparing the privacy incursion against law enforcement needs; we also need further comparison with the proportion of positive outcomes. Of all the people subjected to electronic lineups in stadium scans at the Super Bowl, the system succeeded only in flagging some petty criminals, such as ticket scalpers, not the menaces to society, such as terrorists and violent criminals, that officials claimed to be targeting with the searches. In Tampa, an experiment with Face-IT, a face recognition application, never correctly identified a single face in its database of suspects and didn't result in a single arrest, but had many false positives.

Although cameras are billed as necessary to prevent serious crimes, they are used to raise revenue and catch relatively minor offenders. New York City, San Diego, and Washington, D.C., use cameras at bus stops and intersections to ticket illegally parked vehicles and catch speeders and red-light runners. After data were released in San Diego, the court threw out hundreds of traffic tickets. The data showed that accidents at monitored intersections actually increased. The city's vendor company (Lockheed Martin IMS) had shortened the yellow-light time to catpure more offenders. In Great Britain, the Environment Agency installed a tiny camera in a discarded Coke can to catch people in the criminal act of dumping trash, at a cost of 3,500 pounds (or about $5,000).

Where Does Privacy Begin?

In "Privacy and the Reasonable Paranoid," her *University of Toronto Law Journal* article (Summer 2000), New Zealand scholar Elizabeth Paton-Simpson posits a character, Prudence, who takes extreme precautions to protect her privacy. For example, she keeps her curtains closed day and night; refrains from any public displays of affection, aware that anything she does may be permanently recorded and broadcast to the nation; and never uses public restrooms for fear of being spied on by security or police. I would add that she should wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat at all times when appearing in public because of the risk of false positive matches with terrorist suspects by facial recognition software. Prudence sounds very paranoid, but behaves in accordance with the widespread view of what constitutes a reasonable expectation of privacy in American jurisprudence.

In *Katz v. United States*, the court ruled that the limits of Fourth Amendment protection "cannot turn upon the presence or absence of a physical intrusion into any given enclosure." Later decisions have made it clear that a legally recognized expectation of privacy hinges on social norms. A person's subjective expectation of privacy is only "legitimate in the sense required by the Fourth Amendment . . . [if] the government's intrusion infringes upon the personal and societal values protected by the Fourth Amendment." Hence, as Sherry Colb

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notes, the Court has constructed Fourth Amendment doctrine "by reference to the privacy that one might legitimately expect to have from other private actors, independent of any state surveillance."

When people go out in public, especially in a large city such as New York, they expect anonymity. This is perhaps a paradox, but in a crowded street, individuals are unlikely to really be noticed. As privacy activist Bill Brown observes, "These surveillance cameras strike at the single most beautiful quality about New York, which is, quite obviously, the ability to become anonymous." Of course people realize they will be seen, and perhaps recognized by others when they step outside into public view. I do not suggest that police cannot look at what everyone else can. By stepping outside we implicitly consent to be seen and observed by others, but certainly not to be scrutinized, stalked, or recorded. When the government uses cameras to perform these functions of hyper-scrutiny, it is violating social norms and implicating Fourth Amendment protections.

Unfortunately, the Court has taken a misstep in fleshing out the concept of knowing exposure. In *United States v. Knotts*, the defendant Darryl Petschen was tracked by police by means of a beeper planted on a container in his car. The Court reasoned that when he traveled over public streets, he voluntarily and knowingly conveyed—to anyone who wanted to watch—where he was going and where he stopped on the way; therefore he had no legitimate expectation of privacy in his movements outside. The Court concluded that warrantless, continuous police surveillance was no intrusion and did not constitute a search. But if the police had continued to track the container as it was moved around inside a private residence, hidden from view, then the monitoring would have become a search. As Colb points out, the Court's analysis is counter-intuitive, because clearly anyone would consider the police tracking your every move once you leave the house more invasive than simply keeping track of where in your garage you park your car. Only the strictest formalist would consider your doorstep the place where privacy begins or ends.

Myriad social rules and practices govern our actions concerning privacy in public. Sociologist Erving Goffman documented some of the rules for territory and personal space in public places and limitations on staring. He noted the example of men using urinals in public restrooms: for a period of time they are in close proximity and must expose themselves. Men take considerable care where they look to avoid violating privacy more than necessary. Similarly, when we meet an acquaintance, there is an obligation to greet the other person. An incidental effect of this rule is protection from a sort of spying observation or eavesdropping. We all learn these rules as part of growing up. Social sanctions such as requests to stop staring, or stop listening, or responding with a counter-stare usually keep violators in line.

Conceptual artist Sophie Calle manipulated generally accepted social practices when she found a man's address book by chance and, before returning it to him, photocopied the contents. She then called all of the people listed, interviewed those who were willing, and published their comments about him in a column in the French newspaper *Libération* without ever meeting him. The object of this unwanted attention was extremely upset. Though he did leave his address book lying out in the public view, he in no way consented to having his friends, family, and acquaintances contacted and asked about him. These examples illustrate the fallacy of what Colb identifies as the Court's dubious logical move of equating risk with consent, whereby it treats a person who takes a risk of something occurring, even if it is highly unlikely, as having invited its occurrence. As Paton-Simpson notes, "empirically, social factors are relevant in shaping people's expectations of privacy," and the law should realistically take them into account.

In a case involving a serious crime, *United States v. Torres*, for which a warrant was obtained, Seventh Circuit judge Richard A. Posner noted "that television surveillance is exceedingly intrusive, especially in combination (as here) with audio surveillance, and inherently indiscriminate, and that it could be grossly abused—to eliminate personal privacy as understood in modern Western nations."

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While he declined to rule that video surveillance is unconstitutional, Posner did caution that it should not be used as generally as less intrusive techniques that are available. Even if law enforcement obtained a warrant, a search could be unreasonable if it infringed on personal privacy out of proportion to the "likely benefits from obtaining fuller compliance with the law."

Some states, including California, Hawaii, Illinois, Montana, Oregon, and Pennsylvania, have heightened protection of the right to privacy under their state constitutions. But only California and Hawaii's laws specifically limit video surveillance. There is no federal legislation governing video surveillance. Congress has not yet addressed video surveillance, even though it is in many ways more intrusive than wiretapping. For example, a video camera continuously monitors everything that transpires, whereas surveillance by wiretap will only be triggered when someone speaks. As the court observed in *Commonwealth v. Kean,* a videotape "is likely to contain a richness of detail which could not be successfully communicated by even the most articulate of observers. One does not need a law degree in order to understand that a picture is worth a thousand words."

Chilling Effects

Eighteenth-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham's panopticon imagined a structure that would facilitate the social control of prisoners. A guard tower would be at the center, with prison cells built in a circle around it so that an unseeable guard at the center could always see the prisoners' silhouettes. The system would be effective whether or not there were always a guard in the tower, because prisoners would be aware that they *could be* watched at any time. Modern surveillance systems more closely mirror Michel Foucault's vision of social control enforced by myriad public and private institutions, as public and private cameras have created decentralized zones of surveillance. Reporter Mark Boal, writing in the *Village Voice* (Sept. 30–Oct. 6, 1999), captures the elusiveness of the surveillance problem, and why "we the people" have not rebelled:

> As inheritors of Orwell's vision, we are unable to grasp the soft tyranny of today's surveillance society, where authority is so diffuse it's discreet. There is no Big Brother in Spycam [New York] City. Only thousands of watchers—a ragtag army as likely to include your neighbor as your boss or the police.

Private and police cameras essentially have the same function: to protect private property. And both have a similar effect of making video-monitored space feel controlled, not free and public. But it would feel very different if we knew that Big Brother *was* watching—if all the cameras were linked and their control centralized in law enforcement command centers. Feelings of paranoia would be justified because private viewers are much less likely to be upset by behavior that police may find egregious. For example, on the highway there is a distinction between driving so badly that people around you will use their cell phones to call the police, and driving well enough to satisfy the police officer cruising along behind you.

Contemporary sociologists argue that surveillance has the potential to control the population by keeping social groups apart. In their separate case studies of Los Angeles, urban sociologists Steven Flusty and Mike Davis discuss how heightened surveillance has undermined the potential for interaction between individuals and different social groups, and essentially eviscerated democratic public space. Public streets, parks, and plazas have traditionally provided an arena to "synthesize new cultures, alternative ways of living and popular forces occasionally strong enough to upset entrenched status quos," notes Flusty. Access to city spaces should be guaranteed by virtue of citizenship, but it is increasingly becoming a privilege conferred by status. Surveillance implies that users are not to be trusted; "flawed consumers and other undesirables" pick up on the message that the space is monitored and controlled by the corporations that foot the bill for the security towers and cameras at Los Angeles malls. In *City of Quartz*, Mike Davis described how the Los Angeles Police Department "relentlessly" restricts uses of public spaces and the free movement and association of youths by enforcing juvenile curfews, barricading boulevards, and sealing off entire neighborhoods and public

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housing projects. Available public spaces are increasingly circumscribed as the wealthy elite of Los Angeles construct gated residential communities to exclude the marginalized and ghettoized underclass and use CCTV to police the boundaries and ensure prompt responses to incursions. Flusty underscores the dystopian potential of a fortress city coupled with maximum surveillance:

> Los Angeles is undergoing the intervention and installation, component by component, of a physical infrastructure engendering electronically linked islands of privilege embedded in a police state matrix. If left unchecked, this trend may be linearly extrapolated into a worst case composite of hard boundaries, checkpoints and omnipresent surveillance. Los Angeles will become a city consisting of numerous fortified cores of private space, each augmented by more permeable outer perimeters of contorted paths, lights, motion detectors, and video cameras projecting in the public realm of the side walk and the street. The public streets will become little more than the interstitial space to these fortified private cores.

Police and the military often use surveillance to intimidate protestors. Recent examples include mass demonstrations against the joint World Bank and International Monetary Fund meeting in April 2000, the mainstream Million Family March in October 2000, and protests against George W. Bush's inauguration in January 2001. According to social psychologists, a participant's self-image can be affected by taping, because being a subject of surveillance is unconsciously associated with criminality. The message is clear: "hang with dissenters, and you'll end up in a police video," Boal observes.

Some have argued that taping political protests is actually beneficial to demonstrators, because it protects them from police misconduct. However, the evidence strongly suggests that police develop strategies to avoid becoming the subject of the "disciplinary gaze" themselves. Norris and Armstrong found in their study of CCTV operations in Great Britain that police officers routinely signaled camera operators with a hand gesture to move the cameras away to avoid being caught on camera while standing with other police officers chatting or scuffling with a suspect. Even if police abuses were filmed, the operators certainly didn't forward the tape to the victim; officers were rarely, if ever, disciplined for their actions.

Widespread surveillance of everyday life can have disturbing effects on our psyche. For example, communications professor Carl Botan's 1996 study of workplace surveillance found that employees who knew they were being watched were more distrustful of bosses, suffered from low self-esteem, and became less likely to communicate. The result: "a distressed work force."

On the other hand, some people claim to feel reassured when using an ATM at night if there is a camera monitoring the transaction. A camera won't actually intervene if someone attacks, but perhaps the awareness of being watched deters some would-be robbers. A neighbor's son was recently mugged in the lobby of my building. The landlord responded by mounting cameras, as well as posting signs giving notice that the building is under surveillance. This seemed an appropriate response to supplement the other "security" features of the building: the vestibule and lobby were always clean, well-lit, and visible to the street through plate glass windows. Cameras don't make spaces as safe as these other options, but they may have a place, say, in particularly high-risk locations, such as ATMs, or low-traffic areas, such as lobbies and elevators. There is a balance to be struck between the need for public space where we can be free of prying eyes and preserving personal safety. Where cameras are limited to private indoor or desolate outdoor spaces (such as parking garages), not just set out to monitor public streets or parks, their use is justifiable. Fair warning that one is being taped should accompany video surveillance. This serves two purposes: one is aware of being watched, and so can avoid any embarrassing displays before the camera; second, it may serve a deterrent function.

Spaces that are accessible, not defensive, will be used by more people, thus rendering them safe for all. To which playground would you rather send your child? The one bristling with surveillance cameras or the one that has none? Electronic patrols signal not safety but insecurity. Public space scholar William H.

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Whyte cites numerous examples to support his assertion that places "designed in distrust get what was anticipated.... The best way to handle the problem of undesirables is to make a place attractive to everyone else."

Voyeurism

Video surveillance and facial recognition are easy to sell to a public more paranoid than ever before about terrorists, murderers, rapists, child molesters, cop killers, robbers, and prison escapees in our midst. What could be less objectionable than catching terrorists? Each intrusion is introduced as being a tool against the pariah group or issue: drug testing, once just for high security jobs, is now being implemented against secretaries at your local Board of Education and students who participate in extracurricular activities; EZ Pass was introduced to alleviate traffic congestion, and is now used to track speeding remotely and issue tickets; it could be used in the future to trace people's whereabouts. After the technology has been implemented with one justification, over little public objection, we can be sure that it will be used for a much wider range of everyday activities and against many more people. Sociologist Gary Marx warns, "Once the new surveillance systems become institutionalized and taken for granted in a democratic society," they can be "used against those with the 'wrong' political beliefs; against racial, ethnic, or religious minorities; and against those with lifestyles that offend the majority."

Contrary to the assumptions of privacy jurisprudence, reasonable people do not intend to waive all rights to privacy when they appear in public. Reasonable people trust that their privacy will be more respected than the law recognizes. If we use a contextual approach to determining the contours of Fourth Amendment privacy in public spaces, we see that constant video surveillance is clearly inappropriate and a violation of the government's mandate to leave people free from unreasonable searches and seizures. Fundamental values of autonomy and freedom of association are crucial to the vitality of a democratic society. And public privacy is essential to guarantee equal access to the benefits of privacy. If it is confined to private spaces, it becomes available only to the affluent. Under this regime, of course, homeless people, who have committed no crime, have no defensible right to privacy. There is a whole range of socially productive interactions that can only happen outside—in particular, anything involving people we don't already know, or anything unplanned, unexpected, or kept secret from the people we live with. Our legal regime should protect our trust and the values that underlie it, not undermine it with unchecked spying. ●

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Teaching the Lessons of 9/11

Leo Casey

As the first anniversary of September 11 approached, a controversy over the meaning of that fateful day and the place it will occupy in our national self-understanding irrupted into public view. The debate emerged not as battling manifestos by prominent intellectuals or as dueling polemics in the leading political journals, but from a struggle over how 9/11 would be taught in the nation's public schools. If they could agree on nothing else, all parties to this debate believed that the battle for their vision of 9/11 would be won or lost in the classroom.

The first sign of the controversy was a front-page story in the August 19, 2002 edition of the conservative *Washington Times,* published under the headline "NEA Delivers History Lesson." The article accused the larger of the two national teacher unions, the National Education Association, of adopting a "blame America" approach to teaching about 9/11. With supportive commentary from Phyllis Schlafly and other figures of the far right, the *Times* set its sights on the NEA's *Remember 9/11* Web site, created to help teachers prepare lessons for the anniversary. According to the *Times* article, *Remember 9/11* and the NEA were full of "lies"; they saw the defense of "Western culture" as the "ultimate sin"; they failed to teach children that "the root of the problem lay in Islamic teaching."

In the days following, the *Times* printed three stories and two editorials supporting the claims of the original article. One of the editorials put forth what became the core contention of the conservative case against the NEA—but shorn of the first article's embarrassing far-right rhetoric. "The NEA staff have apparently busied themselves this summer," the editorial charged, "preparing lesson plans cautioning teachers not to 'suggest any group is responsible' for the terrorist airliner hijackings."

Teacher unions, especially the NEA, have long been a favorite target of conservative pundits, and the *Times*'s attack put the scent of blood into the water. A feeding frenzy of the right ensued. *Washington Post* columnist and ABC television commentator George Will reiterated the claims of the *Times*, mocking the "pitter-patter about 'diversity' and 'tolerance'" on the NEA Web site. Oliver North of Iran-Contragate fame took his best shot at the NEA over the issue, and Chester Finn, assistant secretary of education during the Reagan years and now president of the right-wing Fordham Foundation (with its own publication on how to teach 9/11), rushed to get in his licks. The NEA's *Remember 9/11* was "a mishmash of pop-psychotherapeutics, feel-goodism, relativism and overblown multiculturalism," Finn opined. The Internet columnist Matt Drudge, who made his name breaking the news about the most salacious details of the Monica Lewinksy scandal on his Web site, jumped into the fray, followed by nationally syndicated columnists Bill Cotterell, Linda Chavez, and Mona Charin. The accusations became the focus of television political talk shows, with entire segments of Fox Cable's *O'Reilly Factor* and *Hannity and Colmes* and CNN's *Talkback Live, Late Edition,* and *Crossfire* dedicated to

Personal disclosure: for close to two decades, I have been a public school teacher and active teacher-unionist; I now work for the New York City local of the other national teacher union, the American Federation of Teachers. In the weeks following September 11, 2001, I debated many of the issues discussed here on the Internet with Chester Finn, whose work is examined here. My tongue-in-cheek reply to his weekly column, in which I was placed in the role of an "obscure desk jockey" in a teachers' union, can be read at: lists.cua.edu/scripts/wa.exe?A2=ind0110&L=arnl&T=0&O=A&P=30844.

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the subject. By the end of August, the accusations had made their way into regional newspapers from Tallahassee to Denver and across national boundaries to the Canadian *National Post* and the *Times* of London.

There was only one problem: there was no truth to the charges. When journalists and scholars without a political axe to grind looked into the claims of the *Washington Times*, they quickly saw that the right-wing newspaper had completely misrepresented the contents of the NEA's *Remember 9/11*. In the online journal *Salon*, media observer Brendan Nyhan revealed that the entire basis for the *Times*'s claims was a single lesson plan, written by Brian Lippincott, director of programs for the Graduate School of Psychology at California's Kennedy University. It had been published on the Kennedy University's Web site, and the NEA Web site simply had a hyper-link to it, one of more than one hundred lesson plans so linked. (The Web site also had links to more than sixty different organizations, including the Red Cross, the Public Broadcasting System, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security.)

Worse, the content of the lesson plan, which primarily addressed the psychological anxieties of school children, had been distorted beyond recognition. The *Times* had done a cut and paste job, not even marking cuts with ellipsis dots, making it appear that the plan instructed teachers to say that al-Qaeda was not responsible for the 9/11 attacks. In fact, the lesson plan merely called upon teachers to explain that it was wrong to blame an entire religion or entire ethnic community for the attacks. The *Times* even managed to misrepresent the sentiments of a number of classroom teachers who were quoted as being critical of the NEA Web site when they were actually supportive.

At the end of the day, the worst that could be said about the NEA was that it demonstrated a lack of political savvy when it published a Web site with so many links that its opponents could use unfairly, and when it took so long to respond to the attacks upon it. (The *Commemorating 9/11* Web site of the other national teachers union, the American Federation of Teachers, uses a much smaller number of carefully vetted links.) Writing in his weekly *New York Times* education column, Richard Rothstein found that the advice given in the disputed lesson plan was innocuous, "no different from that of President Bush and other national leaders." He noted that Finn's Fordham Foundation publication contained passages—for example, expressions of outrage at the Taliban's treatment of women and gays and appeals to the United States government not to persecute certain ethnic groups as it had persecuted Japanese-Americans during the Second World War—that certainly would have been criticized by the right if they had appeared on the NEA Web site. The conservative attacks on the NEA's *Remember 9/11* were "intemperate," Rothstein concluded. They had "poisoned" the debate on how to teach 9/11.

The pity of the campaign against the NEA is that we need a real national debate about teaching 9/11, a debate involving substantive differences on the issues and voices from across the political spectrum. The NEA's *Remember 9/11* is only one of scores of web sites dedicated to the issue and produced by educational and political organizations in the period leading up to the first anniversary. There is much to value and much to criticize in this educational sub-genre. But the public figures on the right who have mounted an intellectually dishonest attack on the NEA have made it necessary to start the national conversation over again.

9/11: Teaching History in The Making

The simple queries that students in every grade bring to the study of 9/11—Why did so many innocent people have to lose their lives? Who was responsible for such murderous deeds? What can be done to ensure that there are no future 9/11s?—are the fundamental questions teachers must address. Indeed, all of the discourses surrounding 9/11, including the controversy over what lessons to teach, are attempts to answer these basic questions.

There are, of course, matters of factual accuracy, such as who the hijackers were and to what organization they belonged. But the fact of al-Qaeda's immediate and direct responsibility for the mass murders does not address

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the larger question of what caused the group to act in that way. And there are significant political and moral differences of judgment over this larger question.

One of the ironies of the conservative attack on the NEA's *Remember 9/11* Web site is that there are genuine manifestations of a "blame America" approach in the educational literature, but they have received scant attention compared to the falsely accused NEA. For example, in the *Teachers College Record*'s special issue on "Education and 9/11," Michael Apple writes about the importance of directing classroom inquiry to "why there are people in many parts of the world who have such extremely negative feelings toward the U.S. and the global capitalism our economy fosters that they would go to any extreme to call attention to their cause." Education writer Alfie Kohn announces in the *Rethinking Schools* special issue on "War, Terrorism and Our Classrooms" that the attacks "had a context and perhaps a motive that are perfectly comprehensible," with origins in the reality "that the United States has no problem with terrorism as long as its victims don't live here or look like most of us." For all their insistence upon the importance of context in understanding and teaching the lessons of 9/11, the practitioners of this approach ignore the most basic of contexts: the theocratic and totalitarian worldview that inspired these horrible acts. Indeed, a discussion of this ideology is a serious lacuna in virtually all of the educational literature on 9/11, left, right, and center. But knowledge of the perpetrators of 9/11 is indispensable to grasping why the events took place and what must be done to prevent their recurrence.

The "blame America" school of thought provides the perfect foil for conservative moralist and former secretary of education William Bennett, who brings his insistence on moral absolutes to the lessons of 9/11. In Chester Finn's collection of essays, *9/11: What Our Children Need To Know,* Bennett declares that teachers should tell their students that what took place that day was "plainly and simply, evil." Against a rhetoric of equivocation, evasion, and excuse, such "moral clarity" acquires a certain power. But Bennett's notion (like George W. Bush's talk of "evildoers") skirts the edge of a tautological conception of evil in which evil becomes the quality that makes a person commit evil deeds. Evil is present only in the other, the evildoer, and there it becomes foreign, mysterious, almost incomprehensible. Consequently, when it is time to move beyond the initial moral judgment to a deeper understanding of evil, Bennett's moral philosophy has limited value. His images—"we saw the face and felt the hand of evil"—might be striking, but you need to know more about your foes in order to defeat them.

Readers will search the pages of the Finn collection in vain for even one critical mention of "blame America" sentiments on the right. Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell claiming (on Falwell's *700 Club* show) that 9/11 was an act of divine retribution by a God angry at America for "the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays" is only the best example of "blame America" from these quarters. Pat Buchanan's comments that the United States brought the attacks on itself with its imperial ambition to act as world peacemaker and policeman, "night-sticking troublemakers" around the globe, surely fits into this category as does Robert Novak's claim that U.S. support for Israel lies behind 9/11. In *Why We Fight,* a 170-page polemic, Bennett manages only a few critical paragraphs on the "blame America" right, and then dismisses such sentiments as inconsequential because those conservatives "wield little or no influence over mainstream American culture." So much for his "moral clarity," with its critique of double standards and moral relativism.

How does one provide students with a serious inquiry into the nature and context of the evil of 9/11? An analogy could be made with how the emergence of European fascism should be taught. To understand the evil of fascism, students would have to investigate both the economic, social, and political conditions that gave rise to it and the organizing techniques of the fascist movement (for example, its reliance on racist, militarist, and "blood and soil" ultranationalist appeals). They would have to learn how fascist movements created totalitarian states through such measures as one-party rule and the suppres-

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sion of civil society. And they would have to become aware of the consequences of fascism, from wars of aggression to concentration camps and genocide.

Similarly, in studying the evil of 9/11, students should investigate the historical context that produced al-Qaeda and similar organizations while noting parallel developments in other religious traditions. An examination of the methods of mobilization, the modes of organization, and the ideology of these groups would identify them as a theocratic species of totalitarianism. (The Islamist ideology of al-Qaeda has clear antecedents in and debts to European fascism, as Ladan and Roya Boroumand lay out so well in their April 2002 *Journal of Democracy* article on "Terror, Islam and Democracy.") A look at the history of terrorism and the reliance of totalitarian movements and states on acts of terror—first analyzed by Hannah Arendt—is essential. There is no reason why such analyses can not be made accessible to high school and middle school students.

Bill Bigelow's lesson on terrorism in the special 9/11 issue of *Rethinking Schools* (in which he has his students define and conceptualize terrorism) suggests the type of questions teachers should bring up. Unfortunately, Bigelow leads his students toward a concept of terrorism that is so vast and amorphous as to include every possible global injustice, from illiteracy and AIDS to famine and homelessness. The term loses its meaning, and what could have been a very effective pedagogical exercise is undermined. A lesson properly focused on defining terrorism, on distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate uses of violence, would be of great value in helping students understand why moral judgment must be passed on terrorist practices and why the war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda has an entirely different moral character. With a meaningful definition of terrorism in hand, students can ask themselves some difficult questions about actions undertaken in the past by the United States and its allies, such as firebombing Dresden and dropping the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With an understanding of the legitimate use of violence as laid out in just war theory, they could also wrestle with difficult questions concerning possible future actions of the United States, including the proposed invasion of Iraq. When students have to worry over the notion that it is possible to commit serious moral wrongs in the pursuit of a good cause, such as the war to defeat fascism, they will be on their way to developing a much deeper and richer moral philosophy than the one offered by William Bennett.

Facing History and Ourselves, an organization dedicated to education around issues of anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of prejudice, has produced a Web site particularly rich in scholarly and other materials that can help teachers and students put the events of 9/11 into the instructional context outlined above. Of particular note are the following: a discussion that locates fundamentalist Islamist ideology in the context of religious extremism in many different faiths and cultures, an analysis of Osama bin Laden's appeals to the Arab and Islamic "street," and a presentation by the South African judge who headed up the Independent Inquiry on Kosova that places 9/11 in the context of escalating attacks on innocent civilians during wartime.

Patriotism in the Classroom

Divisions in educational literature over the causes of 9/11 are even more pronounced in discussions of America's response. Although many see a role for schools in promoting the solidarity of Americans under attack and in celebrating the democratic ethos of American society, parts of the academic left showed profound discomfort with expressions of patriotism. And although many saw a role for schools in promoting the democratic values of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity—especially at a moment when Muslim Americans and Americans of Arabic and South Asian origin were in danger of being targeted by a backlash—the right continued to express discontent with such "multicultural" education.

If the special 9/11 issue of *Teachers College Record* is any indication, significant segments of the left in schools of education are so alienated from all things American that they have lost touch with political reality. A controversy over the pledge of allegiance and the na-

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tional anthem in Madison, Wisconsin's public schools is a case in point. In August 2001, the Wisconsin legislature amended the state budget to require that the pledge be recited and the national anthem played every day in all publicly funded schools. After 9/11, part of Madison's academic left protested the requirements, and the school board undertook a transparent effort to circumvent the law. The result was predictable: the local newspapers ran banner headlines while angry Madisonians turned out in force at the board's meetings and compelled members to retract their anti-pledge and anti-anthem measure. In William Bennett's words, the day was won by "those Americans who had no trouble expressing their love of country in public, and no problem with their children doing the same."

For Michael Apple, who supported Madison's attempt to evade the law and wrote about it in the *Record*, the flag and the anthem are unequivocal symbols of militarism and jingoism, of mindless war fervor and the silencing of dissent. There is no recognition on his part of the way in which the display of the flag after 9/11 was a means of expressing mutual solidarity among citizens who had just been violently attacked. Nor is there any acknowledgment that this is the same flag that flew over American troops who liberated enslaved African-Americans during the Civil War and freed concentration camp inmates at the end of the Second World War. There is also historical amnesia with respect to, on the one hand, the embrace of the flag by the 1930s trade union movement and the 1960s civil rights movement, and, on the other hand, opposition to the flag's egalitarian symbolism by the diehard supporters of white supremacy who incorporated Confederate banners into many a state flag design. Completely lost on Apple and like-minded people is the pedagogical import of Norman Thomas's sage advice to protesters during the Vietnam era: wash the flag, don't burn it.

Consider some of the pedagogical possibilities. Students could investigate the history of the flag as a national symbol and the idea that "the republic for which it stands" is a work in progress, with injustices to overcome as well as accomplishments to celebrate. In his essay on "A Thoughtful Patriotism" (found on the 9/11 Web site of the National Council for Social Studies), Robert Stevens shows how a study of the artistic interpretations of the flag by Childe Hassam and Jasper Johns could be used for reflections of this sort. The history of the pledge of allegiance could be studied, starting with its origins as a democratic credo penned by a socialist author. The history of judicial rulings on the recitation of the pledge in public schools could be examined, providing students with a basis for understanding why a democratic society should not compel any citizen to utter an oath against his or her conscience, even an oath to democratic ideals. The requirement to play the national anthem could also become the subject of creative pedagogy. Students could find different musical interpretations, representing diverse cultural traditions: Duke Ellington's jazz interpretation, Rachmaninoff's classical recital, Gene Autry's country and western version, Charlie Daniels's bluegrass performance, Marvin Gaye's soulful rendition, Biz Markie's hip-hop translation, and the rock impressions of the Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix. Then the daily playing of the national anthem could become a vivid lesson in the cultural pluralism of America, a living *e pluribus unum*. Let the conservatives rail against such a pedagogy—it's a battle they cannot win.

Some of the best lesson ideas in the 9/11 educational literature employ a pedagogy of democratic patriotism to address students' need to express their solidarity with other Americans and to memorialize those who died. The *Reflecting on 9/11* Web site of the New York City chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility highlights a series of lessons in which students decide what would be the best way to remember the dead. Students study the nation's classic text of remembrance, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, but also read a newspaper column in which Gary Wills, author of the leading scholarly text on the address, criticizes its reading at 9/11 memorial ceremonies. Respect for those who died, Wills says, demands that memorial ceremonies invoke the specificity of their death and their sacrifice. Students would decide whether or not they agree, fig-

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ure out what insights might be taken from the Gettysburg Address, and write and deliver their own speeches of remembrance. An equally powerful lesson would focus on the controversy over what to do with the site of the World Trade Center. Students could study other memorials (such as the Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., and the AIDS quilts), read a number of the "Portraits of Grief" in the *New York Times,* and describe their ideas for an appropriate memorial.

Through these projects, students would experience firsthand the civic virtue that lies at the heart of democratic patriotism. The selfless sacrifice for the greater good of the community is devalued in our economy of self-interest, yet it is what inspired hundreds of firefighters, police, and emergency medical technicians to charge into the towers; it inspired the passengers of Flight 93 to refuse to allow their plane to become a weapon to kill others. The same spirit motivated teachers and paraprofessionals in the schools near Ground Zero to ensure that thousands of students were safely evacuated. While some citizens made the supreme sacrifice, many others found ways to express their solidarity with simple acts of kindness. The *Rethinking Schools* discussion of Stephen Jay Gould's *New York Times* op-ed piece, "A Time for Gifts," encourages students to conceive of ways in which they could make similar gifts.

A pedagogy of democratic patriotism differs in important ways from conservative calls to teach patriotism. The first teaches a living patriotism, more concerned with democratic ideals than with the symbols that represent those ideals, more focused on engendering civic virtue than on venerating the rituals that express it or establishing a canon of political texts. Democratic patriotism is self-reflective, fully capable of criticizing the country when it falls short of its ideals. And it is based on the inclusive citizenship of a pluralist democracy. Consider, by contrast, the shameful way in which William Bennett obliterated Mark Bingham, who helped spearhead the charge on Flight 93's hijackers, from his account of that heroic effort in *Why We Fight*. Bingham was gay. No mention either of Father Mychal Judge, the Catholic chaplain of the New York City Fire Department who gave his life as he brought spiritual aid to fallen comrades. Judge, too, was gay. And Bennett does not even make passing reference to the incredible mosaic of people of every faith and from every region around the world who died on 9/11. That rich diversity is not his America. But it is our America, and one of the reasons why we love it.

Teaching Tolerance

From the very first days following 9/11, there was widespread recognition among America's teachers of the importance of educating against the ethnic and religious stereotyping that would blame and seek revenge against Muslim Americans and Americans of Arabic and South Asian origins. In New York City, for example, the United Federation of Teachers gave priority to assembling a handbook on how to teach tolerance despite the fact that the union was pressed to meet the needs of members and students who had lost loved ones and to help relocate seven schools. At stake, we believed, was the ability of New Yorkers to maintain democratic ideals of tolerance and pluralism.

Teaching tolerance is a recurring theme in every collection of 9/11 educational literature produced by classroom teachers and their organizations. For example, the PBS *America Responds* Web site presents a lesson plan on the relevance of the treatment of Americans of Japanese and German descent during the Second World War. The lesson has students consider whether such treatment was justified and in accordance with American ideals, and then, drawing upon parallels between Pearl Harbor and 9/11, asks if they see the potential for mistreatment of Muslim Americans and Americans of Arabic and South Asian descent.

None of this sits well with educators on the right. Chester Finn singles out for criticism a piece called "My Name Is Osama," which appears on the 9/11 Web site of the National Council for Social Studies. It is the story of an Iraqi immigrant boy with the misfortune of having the name Osama. After 9/11, his name and his ethnicity become a cause for cruel taunts and bullying by his classmates. The story concludes with a number of questions for students to discuss. After identifying the story as an example of what is wrong with post-9/11

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educational literature, Finn admits that there is nothing objectionable about the article's discussion of anti-Arab prejudice per se. Rather, it is the narrow focus on that topic, to the exclusion of civics and history, that troubles him. "Why had Osama and his family migrated to U.S. shores? What is it that they came for? Why was it important? Where is that part of the lesson?" But the story does, in fact, begin with an account of why the family must leave Iraq: Osama's father is beaten by Saddam Hussein's soldiers after he refuses to put a poster of the Iraqi dictator up on the wall of his new home. The family flees and two weeks later arrives, in the words of young Osama, in the "land of the free." One of the follow-up questions for student discussion specifically addresses the issue of why Osama's family left Iraq for America. Whatever the ideological mechanism that allows Finn to misrepresent this lesson so completely (does he even read the texts he criticizes?), his objections are without merit. It is hard not to conclude that his real opposition is to a lesson focused on countering anti-Arab prejudice.

In the same vein, Finn and a number of other conservative commentators object to lessons on the Japanese-American internment during the Second World War. In the preface to his collection, Finn takes the NEA to task for having a Web link to a lesson on this topic. Yet two of the contributors to his collection mention the importance of avoiding the errors of the internment. Finn's problem seems to be with the NEA's raising this issue.

Unfortunately, Finn has many competitors on the academic left for the title of blind ideologue. With a flourish of inflammatory rhetoric in *Teachers' College Record*, the prolific radical academic Henry Giroux approvingly quotes social critic Mike Davis's charge that "the good ole boy equivalent of Kristallnacht" was waged against American Muslims and Americans of Arabic and South Asian origin after 9/11. When one goes to the footnote in Davis's essay to discover the justification for such an accusation, one is directed to a record of bias incidents and hate crimes compiled by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, an umbrella organization of Muslim communities in the United States. The CAIR report, *American Muslims: One Year After 9/11*, provides a far more nuanced and complex account than one would suspect from the

WEB SITES DISCUSSED IN THIS ARTICLE

American Federation of Teachers: Commemorating September 11
www.aft.org/news/911_anniv.html

Educators for Social Responsibility: Teaching After 9/11 and the War in Afghanistan
www.esrnational.org/wtclessons.htm#anniversary

Facing History and Ourselves: A Year Later: Considering the Legacies of September 11
www.facinghistory.org/facing/fhao2.nsf/all/September+11+Menu?opendocument

Fordham Foundation: September 11: What Our Children Need to Know
www.edexcellence.net/Sept11/September11.html

National Association of School Psychologists: One Year Later: A 9/11 Memorial
www.nasponline.org/NEAT/911memorial.html

National Council for Social Studies: Teachable Moments: September 11
www.socialstudies.org/resources/moments/

National Educational Association: Remember September 11 [The site now includes links to key documents from the controversy over its content.]
www.neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety/september11/materials/lessonhome.htm

New York City Educators for Social Responsibility: Reflecting on September 11
www.esrmetro.org/reflectingon911.html

Public Broadcasting System: America Responds
www.pbs.org/americaresponds/educators.html

Rethinking Schools: War, Terrorism and Our Classrooms
www.rethinkingschools.org/special_reports/sept11/

Teachers' College Record: Education and September 11
www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=10997

Teaching Tolerance Program of the Southern Poverty Law Center: In Darkness Light
www.tolerance.org/teach/current/event.jsp?cid=367

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Giroux and Davis texts. CAIR cites many incidents, including acts of violence and a small number of bias-related murders. Yet, based on a wide variety of post-9/11 public opinion polls, the report concludes that Americans are still more tolerant than not of Muslims (only one in four Americans consistently expressed prejudice). More important, a national survey conducted by CAIR of members of Muslim communities revealed that although 57 percent had experienced some act of discrimination following 9/11, 80 percent had experienced acts of kindness and support from members of other faiths. Only on the margins, among Christian and Jewish fundamentalists, did CAIR find demagogic anti-Muslim appeals. On the *Facing History and Ourselves* Web site, Malik Mufti, an Iranian expatriate and Tufts political science professor specializing in Middle Eastern politics, makes a persuasive case that calls for tolerance and warnings that bias attacks would be prosecuted saved lives after 9/11. One finds not a hint of any of these developments in Giroux.

What is especially revelatory in Giroux's analysis is the lack of practical suggestions about how to diminish intolerance. In this respect, his essay is representative of the general tenor of the *Teachers' College Record's* special issue on 9/11. The left academic authors express complete political despair without any ideas for practical pedagogical and political interventions. Meanwhile, classroom teachers and their organizations have been actively engaged in finding ways to teach tolerance. For radical academics, the study of actual classrooms and schools has given way to a broad social and political analysis based on the premise, as Giroux states in his essay, that education takes place in all of society, not just schools. Put the words "pedagogy of" in front of whatever question is under study, and it becomes educational analysis. In the *Record's* special issue, this technique reaches an apogee of absurdity in a treatise by Kerry Burch dedicated to the notion that "Walker Lindh's transgressive love of the Taliban is a moment of high pedagogical importance." In other essays and in the field of education more generally, the social and political analysis is a pale and inferior imitation of what takes place in the other disciplines of the social sciences. One essay—"On the Limits of Liberalism and Multiculturalism" by Haithe Anderson—assumes that the extreme intolerance of al-Qaeda and the Taliban represent a fundamental and unanswerable challenge to the liberal ideal of tolerance. This ignores the fact that the question has been addressed across centuries of liberal political philosophy; not one text in that tradition is examined.

Both the educational right and the academic left have produced much in the literature on how to teach 9/11 that demands serious criticism. But there is also a great deal in that literature—especially from the ranks of active classroom teachers and from teacher organizations—that makes a vital contribution to the educational work before us. What a powerful statement it is about the virtues of democracy in education that the grounded wisdom of everyday educators, rather than the ideological notions of the politically powerful and the academic elite, has produced the finest contributions on how to teach 9/11. To the extent that America's teachers determine the place of 9/11 in our national memory, partisans of democracy have little cause for concern, and much reason for optimism. ●

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American Culture Since 9/11

These are heroes then—among the plain people—Heroes did you say? And why not? They give all they've got and ask no questions and take what comes and what more do you want?
—Carl Sandburg, *The People, Yes*

Kevin Mattson

September 11, 2002, has passed away, and so too the expected memory-fest. Pundits scurried about, as they had a year before, in order to ask the big question: have we changed as a nation or not? Our middlebrow magazines, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, pointed out that Americans were voting in record numbers to elect the next "American Idol"—the newest "reality" television event. Thus, we seemed to be settling back into our comfortable normalcy of vapid entertainment. Still others did their best to commodify our memory cells. The journalist Hanna Rosin explained, "*Life* magazine's collections of haunting photos [of 9/11] has been turned into an heirloom edition—'accented with pure 22kt gold and crafted to last for generations'—complete with its own satin-ribbon page marker. September 11 as coffee-table book, a display piece to help you 'share' such moments again and again 'with your children and grandchildren.'" To remember this way seems not to remember at all.

There's something annoying about the fact that a larger, collective self-reevaluation did not take place in the wake of September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, to say there might have been a lesson within this tragedy smacks of the ugly rhetoric of Jerry Falwell or the wacky left—that we were getting what we deserved for sins at home or abroad. With this said, though, it's hard to think that such a cataclysmic event wouldn't prompt us to think about ourselves. And I don't mean about our foreign policy, on which there is plenty of debate. What I mean is different: what did September 11 and its aftermath tell us about American culture—about what we had become during the orgiastic years of the 1990s and what we might learn about ourselves in the face of a national tragedy?

One of the many things that happened on that fateful day of 9/11 and immediately afterward was that the visages of ordinary people suddenly pushed aside the smiling celebrities in our mass media. We saw people we don't ordinarily see in magazines and on television – firefighters, ambulance drivers, police officers. Onto the national stage these heroes walked, performing their civic acts of bravery for all to see. Magazines ran pictures with no textual commentary; after all, the image of a tired firefighter was enough to convey the necessary point—that civic sacrifice would pull us through this awful time. In the end, what really mattered were the daily activities of ordinary working people, the sort of people usually ignored. I believe this is one of the legacies of September 11. Check out the 9/11 anniversary issue of *People* magazine; there you see the typical celebrity parade broken up with pictures of housewives and other ordinary citizens. Here in America's heartland, I ask people what they remember from 9/11 that isn't tragic, and they typically recollect iconic images of firefighters. Americans may feast on an "American Idol," but many believe that celebrityhood matters less than the power of ordinary people helping one another.

What explained this entry of average citizens into the mass media, most would argue, was simply the sense of emergency inherent in the event. But if we extend our context by gazing a bit beyond 9/11, and then back into the 1990s, I think we can see a deeper significance. For soon after the planes smashed into the twin towers, the Enron scandal hit, then

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the other scandalous accounting errors. And then we watched what was once unimaginable: CEOs being taken away in handcuffs. Though these events bore no relation to 9/11, they seemed to signal the end of an era. For during the economic bubble of the 1990s, CEOs had transformed their self-image. They became cultural heroes, much like turn-of-the-century robber barons. As Jack Welch, the infamous CEO of General Electric, quipped, "The world of the 1990s . . . will belong to passionate, driven leaders" (read: me). This was odd to hear, because after the Second World War the corporation seemed to have become a large transnational bureaucracy, faceless and impersonal, constituting the basis of what John Kenneth Galbraith called the "new industrial state." Those at the top were largely nameless, almost inconsequential, due to the massive institutional apparatus that subsumed them.

But during the 1990s, CEOs (whose pay, of course, was skyrocketing) reasserted themselves and paraded their personalities in America's anemic public sphere. Witness the proliferation of CEO autobiographies, typically amalgamations of life stories, advice, and superficial philosophy. Within these books, CEOs made themselves heroic—showing themselves advancing their noble causes in the face of harrowing difficulties. So Andrew Grove, in *Only the Paranoid Survive*, referenced military heroes and a "classic scene in old western movies in which a bedraggled group of riders is traveling through a western landscape" in order to provide a sense of what it was like managing Intel. John Sperling, the man who started the University of Phoenix (the private, Internet university that sells well on Wall Street) and CEO of the Apollo Group, portrayed himself as a gutsy man willing to buck the traditional ways of academia. The title of his autobiography, *Rebel With a Cause*, said it all. Bill Gates, author of two books during the 1990s, assumed the role of public philosopher, doling out advice and offering his hand to help us enter a new world transformed by technology. Jack Welch, in *Straight from the Gut*, told a story that Americans love to hear: that of the poor, working-class kid climbing up the rungs of the corporation, eventually to lead it into new and trying times.

Today, of course, Welch is better known as a wizard of selfishness, having cooked up an astounding retirement package, including free cell phones, free tickets to N.Y. Knicks' games, free wine, and a free luxury apartment in Manhattan. It is alongside a collective revulsion against the sheer greed of many CEO's and the accommodating spirit of lackey accounting firms that we should situate the entry of ordinary people onto the national stage following the 9/11 tragedy. It's not difficult to imagine that 9/11's aftermath could prompt a larger cultural reevaluation, at least pushing us to think about who is important, whom we most admire, what values we truly cherish. *Time* magazine told a story of a young boy on his way to a baseball game. He asked a policeman to sign his ball. The policeman suggested that he save the ball for the game, and the boy explained that he wanted a *real* hero's autograph.

AS A HISTORIAN thinking about the recent visibility of ordinary working people, I can't help but look back at American culture in the 1930s. During the Great Depression, America's writers and artists made ordinary people the subject of their works in ways never seen before. Indeed, the documentary dominated cultural expression. The Farm Security Administration, in hopes of understanding rural poverty, sent photographers south to record the sad faces of sharecroppers. The photographs taken during this period—by Margaret Bourke-White, Dorothea Lange, and Walker Evans—now stand as art; their subject matter has become iconic, burned into Americans' collective memory. The documentary spirit spread quickly to other domains of expression. Writers employed by the Federal Writers' Project (FWP) went into the countryside to collect folk tales from ordinary people. Oral histories abounded, culminating in works like *These Are Our Lives*. Carl Sandburg tried to capture the spirit of a wide cross-section of Americans by writing a sweeping epic poem, *The People, Yes*. The independent artist Thomas Hart Benton, who refused any federal support for his painting, put into his grand public murals industrial laborers and farmers working alongside one another, creating what some call a modern version of republican

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producerism, the idea that what really creates collective wealth is the daily toil of regular people.

Historians and scholars in American Studies (an academic discipline whose roots go back to the 1930s) debate the significance of this culture. In *The Cultural Front*, Michael Denning has done the most to revive 1930s popular culture, arguing that it helped to bring together an array of political forces in a "Popular Front." As best he can, Denning disassociates this concept from its Communist Party moorings. He argues that intellectuals, like the writers employed by the FWP, faced poverty themselves and thus allied with ordinary people, creating a vision of Americans bound together by social democracy and the hopes of producerism, ethnic inclusion, and antifascism. Denning is right to argue that behind much of this stood an independent left, deriving from an old and indigenous radical strain in American political and intellectual life. Though some of what he says is overdrawn (he tries too hard to disassociate this indigenous left from liberalism), Denning's central claim, one that Kenneth Burke and the historian Warren Sussman had already developed, is indisputable: "the people" themselves became an object of admiration, a cultural icon, during the 1930s. They were truly everywhere.

Since the time of the depression, though, the anti-Stalinist left attacked anything that smacked of a popular front. It was more than just the associations with Stalinism that drove people like the editors at *Partisan Review* to despair. Their defense of high modernism made them bristle at cultural works that celebrated ordinary people or were directed toward them. Clement Greenberg, for example, argued that "kitsch is the culture of the masses," that is, the culture of totalitarianism. Kitsch retarded the efforts of a serious, intellectually superior avant-garde. Greenberg and his *Partisan Review* compatriots had put their finger on a central weakness of American culture during the 1930s. Certainly, the sentimental populism of filmmakers like Frank Capra could become tacky, melodramatic, naïve at times; and Sandburg's poetry didn't reach the intellectual depth of T.S. Eliot. Though it seemed a bit hysterical to sniff out totalitarianism in populist cultural sympathies (as Dwight Macdonald did when he famously attacked the literary critic Van Wyck Brooks, who had argued that modernism was inherently elitist), the *PR* crowd provided an important warning about the limits of cultural production that drew on or sought to appeal to the energy and emotion of ordinary people.

Nonetheless, there was nothing inherently anti-intellectual about documenting everyday activities. After all, one of the best modernist works arose out of the documentary spirit of the 1930s: James Agee's and Walker Evans's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Working for *Fortune* magazine, Agee had lived with three sharecropper families in order to understand them as best he could (Evans was employed by the Farm Security Administration). Agee balanced his desire to document the damage done to poor people with his hope to convey their dignity. He honed his documentary skills as a practicing journalist while speaking openly about his emotional investment in the lives of the people he was discussing, thereby turning documentation into art and self-reflection. Agee believed in the power of ordinary people but never succumbed to melodrama, schmaltz, or kitsch. His book stands today as a classic.

I don't want to defend all products of 1930s culture. I want instead to remember the spirit that stood behind them and try to figure out what they might tell us today. Most important is the connection between the visibility of ordinary people in American culture during the 1930s and the politics of the New Deal. Not only did the federal government directly encourage documentary art, echoes of its spirit could be heard in Roosevelt's famous "forgotten man" speech. Quite simply, making people visible made it easier to justify a liberal/left politics. The cultural historian Erika Doss has recently argued that American art during the 1930s had a tendency to "eroticize" the naked male body (think of the social realist tendency to paint male workers with their shirts thrown off). Doss argues that this turned workers into "passive objects of pleasure for others rather than the active subjects of their own autonomy and agency." Perhaps, but the point seems ex-

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aggerated (a tendency common in cultural studies). After all, during the 1930s, workers organized themselves politically and won rights that they had never before possessed (and some might argue have been losing in the years since). Quite simply, their visibility helped justify the idea that something should be done—by them and for them.

Perhaps this history can speak to us about the cultural image of ordinary people in the wake of 9/11. Working-class citizens seemed to have disappeared during the 1990s, falling into the cracks as Americans celebrated the wealthy, and CEO's repositioned themselves as heroes. As Joshua Freeman pointed out in the *Nation* soon after 9/11, New Yorkers were shocked at seeing firemen—not celebrities—on the front pages of newspapers and magazines. The shock was not just local but national, and it was clearly due to what we had gotten so used to during the 1990s, when celebrity and wealth paraded everywhere in front of our eyes. A face that was unpainted and unprepared for the cameras represented a radical disjuncture.

My references to the 1930s should not be taken as suggesting that we are on the brink of a new flowering in American culture or a recovery of our democratic heritage. I don't believe in such things as "cycles of history" (that the 2000s will be more liberal than the 1990s, for example). Nor do I believe that historians should go into the business of predicting the future. Nonetheless, American history shows that we have often shifted back and forth from a love of the wealthy to a respect and admiration of ordinary people. I think that in the tragic aftermath of 9/11 we recovered a sense of some of our core values, especially our collective sympathy for civic equality. This happened because ordinary people suddenly leaped to our attention. Maybe we can begin to carve out a politics that reflects the idea that those who work for a living and commit themselves to something larger than their own self-interest should be the primary subjects of public policy. This achievement wouldn't make up for the tragedy of 9/11, but it would suggest that we take the tragedy seriously enough to recognize the dignity of ordinary people and their common sacrifice.

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The Harsh Judgment of History

The Terrorist Worldview and Intellectual Values

Charles W. Collier

"The men of Islam are preparing for you what would fill your hearts with terror . . . "
—Osama bin Laden

Is there a perspective from which contemporary terrorism can be seen as part of intellectual history? If so, what is the place of the terrorist worldview in the history of ideas? And what role should terrorist ideas play in current intellectual discussion?

In his September 2001 address before a joint meeting of Congress, President George W. Bush spoke directly to Muslims throughout the world, saying: "We respect your faith. . . . The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself." Other administration officials and political allies around the world have consistently maintained that we do not oppose Muslim people as such, or the Islamic religion, culture, or civilization. We are said to be at war only with a small, misguided band of terrorists who just happen to be Muslims. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. "The evidence suggests that religion is ambiguous," writes James Carroll, "a source of consolation, hope and compassion but also of intolerance, contempt and even violence." The evidence suggests, in particular, that religious fundamentalism (in its contemporary incarnation as Islamic fundamentalism), though long passed over by history, is once again squarely at issue. (By *fundamentalism* I mean nothing more than the dictionary definition: "strict adherence to any set of basic ideas or principles.")

Consider first the poor Taliban, unable to distinguish among church, state, political party, law, and morality, or more generally between the public and private realms. In their worldview, women, music, and ancient Buddhist statues are on pretty much the same shaky footing. Clearly, the Taliban are not ready for the eighteenth century, with its enlightened philosophy and enduring political achievements such as the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the U. S. Constitution. They are not even ready for the seventeenth century, when John Locke's principles of religious toleration and John Milton's views on freedom of expression were first published. In terms of intellectual history, the Taliban are just about ready for what is called, in both popular and scholarly accounts of Christian Europe, the Dark Ages.

But the present problem goes deeper than the Taliban. It appears that many of our professed modernist allies are not really ready to emerge from their medieval gloom either. According to the *New York Times,* Osama bin Laden enjoys "significant" support even among moderates in Saudi Arabia, where he is considered "the conscience of Islam." "He remains an enormously popular figure," notes Bernard Lewis, "not only with the extremists and radicals who form his main support group, but in much wider circles in the Muslim and more particularly in the Arab world." As a result, the boundaries drawn in the shifting sands of Arabia between "mainstream" Islam, Islamic fundamentalism, and terrorism are becoming increasingly difficult to discern.

Suppose for a moment that the attacks of September 11 were conclusively shown to be the work of Catholic terrorists operating out of France. Is there any chance that the French government would protect the terrorists or refuse to apprehend them? Would Italy refuse to allow its airspace and military bases to be used against the terrorists, on account of its own large Catholic population? And would the

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pope issue edicts blaming the United States for bringing the whole tragedy upon itself?

Of course not. It would not matter that the terrorists were Catholic or that they came from France. No one could (seriously) object if President Bush said he wanted them "dead or alive." And no one would suggest that, in deference to Catholic sensibilities, our military should not style its campaign against them "Operation Infinite Justice" or conduct operations during the Christmas holiday season. In other words, what now is merely a convenient, politically correct fiction would then be a reality: we would indeed be at war only with a small, misguided band of terrorists who just happened to profess a particular religious belief.

It was not always so. For long periods during the Middle Ages, the world's most cosmopolitan, tolerant, intellectually sophisticated, and scientifically advanced civilization was being assembled on Arab and Islamic soil. "For most of the Middle Ages," writes Lewis, "it was neither the older cultures of the Orient nor the newer cultures of the West that were the major centers of civilization and progress, but the world of Islam in the middle. It was there that . . . governments and societies achieved a degree of freedom of thought and expression that led persecuted Jews and even dissident Christians to flee for refuge from Christendom to Islam." Meanwhile a reign of terror was descending upon some of the less enlightened corners of the world, as Catholic monarchs all across Europe busily hunted down suspected "heretics," found them everywhere (especially among critics and enemies), and subjected them to various forms of barbaric inquisition (including torture and burning at the stake).

If today's Catholics are no longer conducting inquisitions it is at least in part because, with an eye to the historical record, they have learned from their mistakes. "Centuries of bloody strife and persecution," suggests Lewis, "almost compelled Christians to secularize their states and societies in order to escape from the vicious circle of persecution and conflict." Today's terrorists, having learned nothing from those tragic and often absurd mistakes of others, are thus condemned, as George Santayana said, to repeat them. (Or perhaps Marx's observation is more apt: that history always repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, and the second time as farce.) Today's terrorists, like those of yesteryear, do not simply profess a particular religious *belief*—they convert it into a political program, and they act (usually boldly) on it.

And what is the basis of that belief? Anthropologists and ethnologists have studied the cultural processes by which particular persons, places, and historical events become invested with sacred or mythological significance. But determining what lawyers term the "evidentiary basis" of religious belief is a matter of assessing the reliability of sources, usually ancient legends, sacred texts, and oral tradition. Here the philosopher David Hume provides a useful test. Faced with the choice between an inherently improbable event (or miracle) and the all too human sources of belief in it (whose fallibility would not be at all improbable), Hume advises: "No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish." In short, "Always reject the greater miracle."

Measured against Hume's standard, the fundamental tenets of Islam are no more empirically implausible, no more rationally preposterous, than those of Christianity or Judaism. Acceptance of the Islamic faith is held to imply belief in (1) God, (2) the angels, (3) the inspired books, (4) the prophets, (5) the day of judgment, and (6) God's predestination of good and evil. (There is also in the main shrine of Islam a sacred black stone, a meteorite that was miraculously sent down from heaven; and another famous shrine was erected over the site in Jerusalem to which Muhammad made a miraculous journey, left a footprint in a rock, and ascended into heaven.) The danger of fundamentalism arises when religion is taken seriously and literally; and the danger is realized when absolutely fantastic propositions having no basis in empirical fact, and admitting neither of proof nor disproof, become the basis for fighting words and ultimately provoke something like a "clash of civilizations." Terrorizing "infidels" or "unbelievers" because they do not

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share in an unlikely assortment of inherently unverifiable beliefs meets the dictionary definition of *farce* as "a ridiculous sham" that "depends upon a skillfully exploited situation rather than upon the development of character." What originally might have seemed to reflect "the solemnity of the remorseless working of things" (in Whitehead's gloss on *tragedy*) has become, at this late date and after a thousand years of highly instructive intellectual history, "something fit only to be laughed at, perhaps contemptuously."

A fitting parable for our contemporary "clash" between Islamic fundamentalism and Western secularism unfolds in *Gulliver's Travels,* when Swift's protagonist finds himself in the midst of "a most obstinate War" between two mighty empires. Their controversy has its roots in the ancient practice of breaking eggs at the larger end before eating them, and in a contrary edict of the emperor "commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penalties, to break the smaller End of their Eggs." Nevertheless, some people feel so strongly about the matter that "eleven thousand Persons have, at several times, suffered Death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the smaller End." Unfortunately, the controlling sacred text is ambiguous: *That all true Believers shall break their Eggs at the convenient End,* "and which is the convenient End, seems . . . to be left to every Man's Conscience, or at least in the power of the Chief Magistrate to determine."

WHAT ROLE should terrorist ideas play in current intellectual discussion? Should we seek to understand terrorists? Should we try to learn about their motives, grievances, political causes, and religious aspirations? Should we even care whether they have a coherent worldview?

Answering "No" suggests that terrorists should be treated as a blind force of nature—dangerous, certainly, but comprehensible only in terms of causal laws governing the physical and biological worlds. No competent criminal investigator would proceed in this way to dismiss the important element of motive from consideration altogether. If only for practical, tactical reasons (for example, catching the criminal), we need to understand terrorists.

But answering "Yes" to the above questions suggests the broader possibility that the ideas and opinions of terrorists should influence and even alter our own thinking. In some realms this is obviously untenable. Hijacking airplanes and intentionally killing thousands of innocent civilians is wrong, even if Osama bin Laden recommends it highly. The square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides, whether or not this conflicts with al-Qaeda geometry. Mozart's music is still beautiful even if it offends Taliban sensibilities. These are not gray areas in which the answers could easily go either way. In none of these cases are the ideas and opinions of terrorists even relevant.

There are, however, two realms in which the current terrorists speak with a certain undeniable authority: religion and politics. In these realms, they have privileged access to the truth about the meaning of their own self-expression, self-identification, and personal ideals. More generally, articles of faith and political causes are *defined by* their most important and influential expositors, just as English usage is defined by Shakespeare and Milton. "The citation of authority for a word," notes the *Oxford English Dictionary,* is "one of the essentials for establishing its meaning and tracing its history." Richard Rorty is correct to point out, "You don't get to be representative of something by saying you represent it." But if enough people agree with you, you do.

We should therefore listen attentively, if not respectfully, when Osama bin Laden articulates his version of Islamic fundamentalism, because he counts as an authoritative expositor of that faith. His views are important because they directly affect the course of world history; they are influential in the sense that millions of people accept them unhesitatingly, regardless of their merits. We now know, in ways that we could not have known a year and a half ago, just how deeply and inextricably terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism are connected—judging by the actions and views of their most prominent adherents. On account of this deep involvement, we can now say much more confidently that the terrorists do not "just happen" to be Islamic fundamentalists. Their religion plays an essential and defining role in

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informing their actions.

The political causes espoused by terrorists must likewise come under renewed scrutiny and reevaluation in light of the recent terrorist attacks. We now possess relevant and valuable new information as to the true meaning of the terrorists' political agenda (roughly speaking, returning to that happy state of affairs prior to the discovery of America). This political program—the shared property of terrorists and those who support them—can now be seen as fully consistent with and indeed partly defined by the terrorist actions taken to implement it. These political ideals now take on new, ominous, and substantively suspect meaning through their deep and inherent association with the worldview of terrorism.

MANY PEOPLE condemn terrorist actions but still sympathize with the underlying religious and political ideals that inspire them. That distinction is no longer available. You and I do not get to decide what those actions and ideals mean, and it is pointless to complain that Osama bin Laden has "betrayed" or "perverted" Islamic fundamentalism (or to disavow the terrorist implications of fundamentalist Islamic politics, as the Palestinian authorities have attempted). One's concept of objectivity, precision, or exactitude should always be appropriate to the realm in which it would be applied; this is not a specifically "postmodern" insight—it is as old as Aristotle. For better or worse, religion and politics are socially constructed systems of meaning in which things mean what prevailing historical opinion and practice dictate, not what critics and kibitzers on the sidelines might suggest or what objective evidence and disinterested scientific observation might indicate. The coin of these realms—these fabled lands of make-believe—is influence and importance, just as it is in language. Charles Richardson refers in his great nineteenth-century dictionary to "the many 'vicissitudes of mutation' which the language has sustained in its descent to these times; when change is at work upon it, with all the wild energies of a restless and indiscreet spirit of improvement." Through their highly influential and widely accepted actions, the terrorists have finally succeeded in redefining their religious and political ideals as terrorist doctrines (roughly speaking, Islamic fundamentalism, militant medievalism, and the inseparability of church and state). There is no higher tribunal to which an appeal may be taken.

We should, therefore, give full and careful consideration to the ideas and opinions of terrorists, particularly as they concern religion and politics. We should take the terrorists at their own word and understand their actions as striking instances of self-expression and as defining features of their own religious and political views. In light of the terrorists' own actions, we should revise our opinions of those views accordingly, potentially rejecting some that we might previously have been inclined to accept. Having once seized the historical moment, the terrorists cannot now expect to escape the harsh judgment of history.

Those who, after careful consideration, still seek a thoughtful and constructive engagement with terrorist doctrines should first put themselves in the position of passengers on an airplane that has just been hijacked by terrorists. Then let the dialogue begin. . . ●

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The Telecom Crisis

Dan Schiller

TELECOM COMPANIES are staggering into the emergency rooms of the world economy, candidates for life support or even euthanasia. Long viewed as leading the way into the "information age" of productivity and enlightenment, they are suddenly presenting symptoms of what appears to be the same life-threatening disease. In the United States, dozens of companies have gone bankrupt over the past two years, with no end in sight. Lucent Technologies, the largest U.S. maker of telecom equipment, has suffered ten straight unprofitable quarters through October 2002 and recorded gigantic losses. Layoffs throughout the industry—more than five hundred thousand as of August 2002, and still counting—have eliminated many more jobs than have been created in telecom since 1996.

Abroad, the situation is no better. Eli Noam observed in the *Financial Times* (July 19, 2002) that the "cumulative debt of the seven largest European carriers is greater than Belgium's gross domestic product." In November 2002, Germany's Deutsche Telekom announced the largest corporate loss in that nation's history. The industry's woes are rocking global finance, evoking comparisons to the 1980s savings and loan debacle.

Overcapacity and destructive competition, old economic scourges, have come to haunt the frontier of twenty-first century capitalism. In just one market segment, international telecom services, by 1996 there were already an estimated 470 carriers worldwide; over 4,000 by 2001. Parallel rivalries erupted in each and every corner of the industry. Where did all these companies come from? What triggered this continuing corporate stampede into telecommunications? We may thank not only Wall Street and its cheerleaders, but also—and especially—the U.S. Government: Congress, the executive branch, *and* the Federal Communications Commission.

A bit of history helps. Between the First World War and the late 1960s in the United States, regulation closely limited competition in this industry. One horizontally and vertically integrated company—American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T)— provided local telephone service to around four-fifths of household users. Outside AT&T's area, local service was offered on a monopoly basis by independent carriers. Almost all U.S. trading partners countenanced comparable service monopolies.

In 1934-1935, the FCC was chartered to conduct a top-to-bottom investigation of the telephone industry. Working with state public utility commissions, and with the aid of further reform legislation passed during the 1940s, the FCC crafted policies to underwrite an inclusive nationwide household telephone service. Household penetration levels increased annually until they exceeded 90 percent beginning in the 1970s because, under this new regulatory regime, phone service finally became generally affordable. As Alan Stone points out in *How America Got On-Line*, while the Consumer Price Index between 1960 and 1973 increased by 44.4 percent, the residential telephone service component of the CPI increased by a mere 14.6 percent. Injustices, to be sure, persisted. The industry's high-wage union jobs, associated with the formation of the Communications Workers of America in the late 1940s, remained largely off-limits to workers of color. AT&T unceasingly took in monopoly profits, in part because its unregulated equipment manufacturing subsidiary allowed it to manipulate the ratemaking process. But some wider benefits of the system were also real. Regulation imposed a true measure of social responsibility on AT&T and

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the industry it led.

All this began to change in the 1960s. President Lyndon Johnson's Task Force on Communications Policy launched "competition" as official policy to guide and shape U.S. telecommunications. The task force specifically urged that the FCC approve licenses for telecommunications companies wishing to compete with AT&T. Every subsequent FCC chair, whether appointed by a Republican or Democratic president, has concurred that deregulation and liberalization should be the rule and that regulation should be the exception.

By the late 1970s, it was clear that the main advocates and beneficiaries of the new policies were business users of the network. These institutional users were setting their sights on a highly attractive target—the regulatory requirement that their rates subsidize the costs of providing service to ordinary customers. And before long, these users were pursuing a still more sweeping goal—to ensure that the merger of telecom and the computer proceed largely outside traditional utility regulation. The New Deal regime was at an end.

OVER THE COURSE of thirty-five years—roughly from 1965 to 2000—the direction and substantive character of U. S. (and ultimately of global) telecom system development were redefined. As corporate and military investment accelerated and enlarged the technological revolution around telecommunications, phenomenal organizational and technical change gripped business at large, from agriculture and manufacturing to retail trade and services. By 1989, the annual expenditures of the top hundred business telecommunication users ran the gamut from a billion dollars at the top of the list to about twenty million dollars at the bottom. The average expenditure was between fifty million dollars and a hundred million dollars. The top ten business users that year reflected the unfolding diversity of corporate networking applications: General Motors, General Electric, Citicorp, International Business Machines, American Express, Westinghouse, McDonnell Douglas, Sears, Ford, and Boeing. One application after another was introduced: Computerized Reservations Systems, Automated Teller Machines, telemarketing systems, and 800 numbers for direct sellers, government agencies, and medical and insurance service providers. Actual "killer applications" were preoccupying strategic planners for the military-industrial complex, as this crucial institution embraced concepts such as the electronic battlefield and infowar. By the mid-1980s, all told, a trillion-dollar corporate capital investment had been made in information technology, including telecommunications, and it went up from there. The U. S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration's estimate of business spending on communications just for the year 2000 came in at $258 billion. New cycles of market entry by would-be competitors were spurred by ever-increasing network investment and proliferating new applications, international and domestic.

Network-enabled services became part of everyday life at work and, soon enough, at home. By 2002, 104 million outgoing telemarketing calls were being made each day, and the telemarketing industry's annual sales had reached six hundred billion dollars. At the same time, business and academic commentators gleefully hailed the "information revolution." Not only was the day-to-day operation of the new "information economy" reliant on networks; it also began to accelerate market development of new information-intensive industries, from business services to education.

MEANWHILE, largely unnoticed, the public was losing out. Costs of residential phone service were being shifted to consumers; for example, the ostensible costs of interconnecting local- and long-distance networks, and the supposed costs of providing universal service. Responsibility for detecting faults in and repairing "inside wiring" was likewise shifted to the homeowner. Directory information now would be supplied only for a fee. Service charges grew more inequitable. As long-distance rates declined, mainly to the benefit of high-volume business users and well-heeled residential callers, local rates remained high. Where the FCC earlier had withdrawn the right of hotels to impose telephone surcharges, now regulators allowed carriers to contract with state prisons to sup-

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ply collect telecom services and to charge inmates' families rates as high as ten times normal direct-dial rates. Newly created jobs at start-up competitor companies were increasingly shorn of any right to collective bargaining, while millions of call-center employees across the length and breadth of industry labored for low pay in high-tech sweatshops.

QUALITY OF SERVICE became worse than an embarrassment. Whereas the FCC had once kept close watch on network service levels, it now abdicated any statistical collection role in regard to data traffic. Absent such statistics, of course, regulation itself is compromised. Substantial and generally superfluous administrative and sales costs, mostly charged to rate- and taxpayers, accompanied the rise of competition in consumer telecom services. Each competitor also created a separate and largely duplicative management and staff. The industry became ever more heavily dependent on advertising, which, previously, had been much less significant. And, of course, competition imposed enormous regulatory costs, as authorities sought to develop sustainable rules. By the 1990s, nevertheless, the FCC was handing out licenses to enter telecom markets like a barker at a county fair, while also working with Executive Branch agencies and the World Bank to use its leverage over the huge U.S. market to push—successfully—for comparable neoliberal telecommunications "reforms" abroad.

A cascade of new consumer electronics playthings, and—ultimately perhaps even more important—stock market profits for upper-middle-class investors helped mute any serious political opposition. By the late 1990s, however, the system was growing shaky. In a 1998 report for the Economic Policy Institute on WorldCom's proposed takeover of MCI, I forecast that on financial and other grounds "MCI-WorldCom is a mistake waiting to happen." As events have shown, what was waiting to happen was a fiasco embracing much more than just two companies.

Four events of the mid-1990s paved the way for that debacle: passage in the United States of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; the World Trade Organization Basic Telecommunications Agreement of 1997; the takeoff of the Internet; and the U.S. policy response to the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998. The Telecommunications Act continued the process of liberalization by setting down terms on which local and long-distance carriers could invade one another's markets. It also altered the legal mandate for regulation, by providing a general basis for the regulatory abdication (known as "forbearance"), which had long since become common practice. It triggered a huge merger and acquisition binge across the greater communications industry, as companies frantically attempted to forestall rivals while themselves seizing turf in adjacent markets.

The World Trade Organization Agreement on Basic Telecommunications opened still further investment opportunities: stock offerings by newly privatized national telecom operators such as Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom, joint-ventures, and solely owned network investment projects in and across national markets. Internationally, after decades of underdevelopment, wireline networks were rapidly modernized and extended, and the number of phones increased explosively. Wireless systems were also built out at a phenomenal rate, from tens of millions of phones in use to a billion in the nineties. But the telecom industry was also taking on gargantuan debts.

The embrace of the Internet triggered its own frenzied corporate scramble for immediate profits. As the Internet's technical capabilities beckoned, the need for an "Internet strategy" became a corporate buzzword. For companies in virtually every industry, Internet investment at any price and for seemingly any purpose began to pass for strategic wisdom. And the telecom infrastructure supposedly needed to carry the torrents of Internet traffic seemed to justify further spectacular expenditures. Equipment spending by U.S. local telecom companies shot sharply upward; it doubled to around a hundred billion dollars annually between 1996 and 2000. Technological breakthroughs boosted information-carrying capacity by two orders of magnitude. A growing array of redundant network operators claimed justification for their existence—often to promote still further capital spending increases—with an eye to bolstering their stra-

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tegic position in the increasingly precarious competitive environment.

A final, seemingly remote macro-economic trend suddenly intervened. In response to the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, the United States opened a flood of easy money. The result was to unleash capitalism's full "animal spirits" on the already superheated stock market, and on the information network sector that had become its poster child. Years had been spent developing that sector for investors, and now, dollars, yen, marks, pounds, francs and other currencies poured in. A gigantic speculative tidal wave was taking shape—destined to end in the crash of high-tech stock values.

OUTRIGHT HYPE now began to pass for sagacity. Projections of exponential increases in demand for telecom capacity became the rule. Technological advances and speculative finance had produced what some analysts believe may have been a five-hundred-fold increase in long distance capacity over a bare half-decade. Predictably, demand could not keep up. Competition intensified. Wireless service providers, long-distance companies, local-exchange carriers and even Internet-based telephone services all sought to carve out for themselves the largest share of the overall market for voice communications. Throughout Europe, recently privatized national telecom operators such as France Telecom and Deutsche Telekom spent tens of billions of dollars each acquiring wireless franchises within their national markets, and making cross-border investments as well.

It was at this point that the finance officers of several U.S. companies began to cook the books to placate investment analysts and shareholders. Shady practices came to pervade the entire industry. Insider trading, accounting fraud, ties between commercial and investment banking services, and other forms of corporate malfeasance and corruption ran at least as deep in the United States as in Japan, a country at which top U.S. policymakers had been railing for a decade.

No segment of the greater telecom industry escaped, as competition led to cannibalism. Giant equipment manufacturers such as Lucent, Nortel, and Alcatel, some of which had pumped up their own sales by helping to finance start-up carriers, now suffered calamitous revenue declines. Even Internet plumbing manufacturer Cisco (though still profitable), saw its revenues and stock price plummet. Dozens of new providers of local exchange services went bankrupt. The number of phone lines served by existing local carriers actually declined for the first time since the Great Depression. In fact, local carriers were devouring their own markets, as subscribers to their wireless subsidiaries began to substitute wireless for wireline service, and as they offered high speed DSL services that don't require second-line dedicated phone circuits. Wireless carriers and equipment makers alone claimed to have lost 65 percent of their market value ($850 billion) since January 2001. Fears grew that even China, which during the 1990s staged an unprecedented network development binge to create the world's second largest domestic telecommunications system, was becoming a saturated market.

Suddenly, after a decade awash in funds, there is almost no capital available for telecom investment. Private investors have grown as reluctant to invest as, before, they had been rash in doing so. The level of uncertainty—indeed, of volatility—has simply grown too high. And, despite continued demand—people and organizations still need communications, the crash notwithstanding—the combination of overcapacity and unbridled competition remains lethal. Bad loans to the telecom industry hang over major banks and insurance companies; no one really knows how acute this threat may become. Bankrupt Global Crossing has accepted a buyout bid by Hutchison Whampoa (Hong Kong-based) and Singapore Technologies Telemedia (regulators still need to sign off on the transaction); the two hundred and fifty million dollar deal values the carrier's twenty-billion-dollar-plus fiber optic network at something more than one penny for each dollar invested in it.

Executives doing the "perp walk" in handcuffs may be satisfying theater for the mass audience, but punishment of individual malefactors does little to relieve the underlying problem. For this, we need significant alterations in the structure and policy of telecom. How-

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ever, policy prescriptions for stabilizing the industry remain confusing and uncertain. The rhetoric of "competition" has not abated; in several key areas policymakers are steaming ahead with deregulation. What else should we expect, when the well-connected telecom industry has spent the past decade funding major political parties on a lavish scale?

Nevertheless, a few sober observers are concluding that competition has become part of the problem. Eli Noam, writing in the *Financial Times* article cited earlier, says that "for telecoms to recover, the corporate strategies and public policies of more than two decades have to change radically." Picking up the theme in the *American Prospect* (September 9, 2002), Paul Starr offers up the view that a new cycle of "regulation in the public interest" is warranted; beyond the goal of rescuing the industry from itself, however, the objective of such a revival remains vague.

JUST WHAT sorts of changes are likely? Recent congressional testimony by FCC chair Michael Powell gives an indication. His suggestions include federal action to hasten broadband (high speed Internet) service deployment; support for mergers between long distance and local exchange carriers; and, unthinkable only months ago, new legislation to grant the FCC itself clear-cut regulatory authority over data services, including the Internet backbone ("so that we can limit any service disruption in these troubled times"). In addition, the federal government seems eager to pump billions of dollars into the industry in the guise of "homeland security."

Looming on the horizon, then, are a reconsolidation of oligopoly power, a new ratepayer-funded service to pull us out of the existing slump, enlarged federal contracts for carriers and equipment suppliers, and a more comprehensive federal steering role. Planners are betting that this policy mix will reduce the overhang in network capacity, raise prices to consumers, and induce capital once again to look with favor on the industry. Residential ratepayers, taxpayers, and employees are thus to bail the industry out of its difficulties.

Will this work? Is a new triumph of conservatism inescapable? Will service downgrades and rate hikes for household consumers, insecurity and layoffs for employees, and network development on behalf of transnational business users and military agencies continue indefinitely?

Yes—unless greater public accountability is immediately instituted. During the late 1930s, the Roosevelt administration convened a "Temporary National Economic Committee," an extraordinary initiative to document and diagnose the causes of the Great Depression. Both houses of Congress were represented, as were some of the administration's top economic planners and antitrust officials. CEOs were called to testify, while a research staff investigated the basic issues involved. The plight of our core infrastructure during this wrenching transition into an informationalized capitalism merits just such a searching and sustained public inquiry. It is long past time to establish a widely accessible, open-ended forum to consider what purposes, what functions, we want our telecom system—and indeed, the overall system of societal information provision—to serve. ●

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Leftist Criticism of "Nature"

Environmental Protection in a Postmodern Age

"[C]ertain contemporary forms of intellectual and social relativism can be just as destructive to nature as bulldozers and chain saws."
—Michael Soule and Gary Lease

Paul Wapner

Most of us are familiar with rightist attacks on environmentalism. For a long time, many people on the right have faulted environmentalists for wanting to curtail free enterprise, limit private property, and abridge individual freedom in the service of environmental well-being. We are less familiar with leftist criticism. Over the past decade or so, however, some parts of the left have launched their own attacks on environmentalism, and, although these are more philosophical in character, they threaten the movement every bit as much as those coming from the right.

Leftist environmental criticism is the work of a group of postmodern intellectuals and professors. Postmodernists expose the constructed quality of those things we take for granted. They unmask the given and show that "what is" is not necessarily "meant to be," but rather is a consequence of particular decisions and socio-historical conditions. Postmodernism is a natural ally of the left in that it deconstructs existing conditions and shows that, although they may appear natural or necessary, they are really contingent; they can be changed. This is a doctrine that has helped people look critically at their society and consider the possibility of other arrangements.

Leftist critiques of environmentalism start from this same premise. They point out that our notions of nature—the nonhuman world that environmentalists care so much about—are themselves social constructions and thus subject to various interpretations, none of which can provide absolute guidance for environmental policy. We never experience nature directly but always through the lenses of our own values and assumptions. "Nature" is thus not simply a physical entity that is "out there" or given; it is an idea that takes on different meanings in different cultural contexts, a social construction that directs us to see mountains, rivers, trees, and deserts in particular ways. Raymond Williams expressed this understanding when he wrote, "The idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history." To postmodernists, "nature" is not something the mind *discovers* but something that it *makes*.

This understanding of "nature" is helpful in guarding against insensitive environmentalist projects. We often assume that everyone concerned with a particular environmental issue shares the same understanding of the problem. But this is far from being the case. When it comes to preserving wilderness areas or protecting biological diversity, one person's wilderness is another person's neighborhood. What one person values as an endangered species is potential income, a threat, or dinner to someone else. Leftist criticism has been important in reminding us that "nature" is not a single realm with a universalized meaning, but a canvas on which we project our sensibilities, our culture, and our ideas about what is socially necessary.

The postmodern argument also poses challenges for anyone concerned with environmental protection. Environmentalism is fundamentally about conserving and preserving nature. Whether one worries about climate change,

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loss of biological diversity, dwindling resources, or overall degradation of the earth's air, water, soil, and species, the nonhuman world is the backdrop of concern. What happens when critics call this backdrop into question? What happens when they claim that one understanding of "nature" is at odds with another and that there is no definitive way to judge which one is better? How can a movement dedicated to protecting nature operate if the very identity of its concern is in doubt?

THESE MAY seem like academic questions, but they go to the heart of environmentalism and have begun to worry even the most committed environmentalists. After scholars such as William Cronon, Timothy Luke, and J. Baird Callicott introduced "eco-criticism" to the scholarly and popular publics, various environmental activists and thinkers have struggled to articulate a response. Their inability to do so in a decisive and persuasive manner has further damaged the environmentalist position. Even more troubling, now that the critique is out of the bag, it is being co-opted by people on the right. Anti-environmentalists such as Charles Rubin and Alston Chase, for example, now claim that, if there is no such thing as "real" nature, we need not treat the nonhuman world with unqualified respect. If we think it is in our interest, we can freely choose to pave the rainforest, wipe out the last panda bear, or pump high levels of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. What is critical to notice in both cases is that criticisms of "nature," whether they come from the left or are co-opted by the right, are playing an increasing role in structuring the confrontation between anti- and pro-environmentalists. And they are re-setting the fault lines within the environmental movement itself.

So far, there have been two responses from traditional environmentalists to postmodern eco-criticism. The first comes from those who dismiss postmodernism out of hand and simply reassert a modernist narrative of nature and its imperatives. According to activists such as Gary Snyder and Dave Foreman, eco-criticism is at odds with common sense and contemporary science. Yes, they say, there is a social dimension to how we think about nature, but nature is fundamentally a physical entity, and our understanding of it can be based on clear-eyed observation, direct experience, and scientific description. The whole notion that nature is constructed is simply intellectual sophistry practiced by those who either spend too much time indoors or who work at such high levels of abstraction that they never engage the phenomenal world. Those making this argument see postmodern attacks on nature as simply the latest manifestation of a long tradition associated with what David Ehrenfeld calls the "arrogance of humanism." Eco-criticism places human beings at the center of all phenomena and then is overly impressed with the self-referential character of human experience. Consequently, it is blind, as philosopher Albert Borgmann says, to nature's nonhuman "commanding presence."

Although many thoughtful scientists, activists, and writers take this position, and, while it remains an important response to eco-criticism, it fails to recognize the eco-critics as serious adversaries. As I have argued, leftist critiques of "nature" are compatible with broader postmodern sensibilities that currently animate much of our intellectual life. When anti-environmentalists claim that, because there is no authentic entity called "nature," we can choose to use trees, animals, canyons, and rivers as we see fit, staunch environmental modernists have little to say. They can disagree about first principles, complain about ontological and epistemological premises, but beyond this they have little to say. Simply rejecting eco-criticism and reasserting a modernist narrative doesn't reckon with the intellectual weight of contemporary attacks on "nature."

A second, more engaging, response goes in the other direction. It comes from people who agree with the critique of "nature" and, by way of response, advocate a post-nature environmentalism. Because everything we call "nature" is relative to our ideas, they argue, we should accept (indeed, embrace) our role as creators of "nature" and assume full responsibility for governing the so-called natural world. Environmentalists in this camp call for fully utilizing technology to confront environmental problems and ask that we be content with human-made landscapes and artificial substitutes for natu-

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ral resources. They counsel ecological stewardship, of course, but maintain that our vision of stewardship need not be hindered by any preconceived notion of what is genuinely natural. Noting the ungrounded character of the idea of nature, Walter Truett Anderson suggests that we see ourselves for what we, in fact, are: eco-artists—designers and builders of the nonhuman world. This second response calls for dispensing with the category of nature altogether and fashioning an environmentalism along other lines of interest and concern.

The eco-artists clearly represent a position compatible with postmodern sensibilities. But dispensing with the category of "nature" means that there are no reigning guidelines for valuing one set of arrangements, or one artistic creation, over another. Yes, environmentalists favoring this second response can advocate certain environment-friendly actions, but how do they make their case? They have no ground on which to argue for *this* set rather than *that* set of ecological conditions. Certainly, their environmentalism would make most traditional environmentalists very uncomfortable. How could an Emerson, Muir, Leopold, Carson, or Brower sign on to such a viewpoint? What would it mean to be a post-nature environmentalist? Doesn't this position make a mockery of the long tradition of environmental concern?

I WOULD LIKE to present a third response to contemporary eco-criticism, accepting the intellectual insights of postmodern critics and, at the same time, providing some guidelines for protecting the nonhuman world. My argument will focus less on the fundamental character of reality—an endless debate—and more on the ethics of environmentalism. The two responses that I've just described ask whether a postmodern sensibility has the right epistemological or ontological "take" on reality—with the first denying and the second defending the rightness. I will ask instead how we want to live in the world and what kind of people we want to be. But I will try to build my answers on (or out of) the ontological debris created by postmodern criticism.

Eco-critics are not intellectual hacks. Neither are most cultural critics nihilistic or amoral. Many of them offer useful insights about human experience. In fact, much postmodern thought acknowledges purposeful elements in human life and attempts to make judgments about the different purposes. Many critics see themselves involved in a moral enterprise. The position I want to defend joins the intellectual and moral dimensions of postmodern cultural criticism by working through what is often called an "ethic of otherness."

One of the hallmarks of postmodernism is the understanding that whenever we reflect upon, talk about, or act in the world, we represent it to ourselves and others. And when we do that, we are not rendering an objective view of reality so much as constructing a certain understanding of the world. We are subscribing to a particular discourse or set of discourses about the "way things are," and this "way" shapes our experience. This is not to say, of course, that physical objects are figments of our imagination or that there is no substratum to reality, but simply that we endow the objects of our experience with particular meanings that determine how we think and act in the world.

The ethical dimension of this insight comes into view when we recognize the danger of forgetting the constructed quality of human experience. We construct our experience, fail to hold onto the idea that we've done just that, and then assume that our constructions are somehow "real." This becomes an ethical failing insofar as it silences the views of others. The claim to know how the world really is expresses a hegemonic ambition; it asserts authority in a way that delegitimizes others' perspectives on human experience and the world in general. This is an ambition—a kind of "violence"—that many postmodernists find unacceptable.

The ethical alternative is respect for the "other." This involves turning down the volume of our own pronouncements about the world and listening to others—or providing them with the opportunity to express themselves so that we can listen. Hence the many efforts by postmodernists to "give voice to the other": from academic campaigns to expand the literary canon to popular efforts to embrace and celebrate multiculturalism. The aim is to pro-

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mote the expression of the marginalized and disadvantaged.

While postmodern cultural critics are comfortable giving voice to other people, they stop short at the nonhuman world—the paradigmatic "other." When it comes to nature, postmodernists are happy to do all the talking. They seem to see no need to heed the voice of the nonhuman, no reason even to assume that, in the vast world of rivers, chimpanzees, rainstorms, and whales, anything is being said. Postmodern cultural critics look at the nonhuman world and think that they are looking in the mirror. There is nothing out there with its own authentic voice because, as soon as we imagine it expressing itself, we recognize that *we* are speaking, and therefore making up, its words. As Christopher Manes puts it, "It is as if we had compressed the entire buzzing, howling, gurgling biosphere into the narrow vocabulary of epistemology, to the point that someone like Georg Lukacs could say, 'nature is a societal category'—and actually be understood."

THE THIRD response to eco-criticism would require critics to acknowledge the ways in which they themselves silence nature and then to respect the sheer otherness of the nonhuman world. Postmodernism prides itself on criticizing the urge toward mastery that characterizes modernity. But isn't mastery exactly what postmodernism is exerting as it captures the nonhuman world within its own conceptual domain? Doesn't postmodern cultural criticism deepen the modernist urge toward mastery by eliminating the ontological weight of the nonhuman world? What else could it mean to assert that there is no such thing as nature?

I have already suggested the postmodernist response: yes, recognizing the social construction of "nature" *does* deny the self-expression of the nonhuman world, but how would we know what such self-expression means? Indeed, nature doesn't speak; rather, some person always speaks on nature's behalf, and whatever that person says is, as we all know, a social construction.

All attempts to listen to nature are social constructions—*except one*. Even the most radical postmodernist must acknowledge the distinction between physical existence and nonexistence. As I have said, postmodernists accept that there is a physical substratum to the phenomenal world even if they argue about the different meanings we ascribe to it. This acknowledgment of physical existence is crucial. We can't ascribe meaning to that which doesn't appear. What doesn't exist can manifest no character. Put differently, yes, the postmodernist should rightly worry about interpreting nature's expressions. And all of us should be wary of those who claim to speak on nature's behalf (including environmentalists who do that). But we need not doubt the simple idea that a prerequisite of expression is existence. This in turn suggests that preserving the nonhuman world—in all its diverse embodiments—must be seen by eco-critics as a fundamental good. Eco-critics must be supporters, in some fashion, of environmental preservation.

Postmodernists reject the idea of a universal good. They rightly acknowledge the difficulty of identifying a common value given the multiple contexts of our value-producing activity. In fact, if there is one thing they vehemently scorn, it is the idea that there can be a value that stands above the individual contexts of human experience. Such a value would present itself as a metanarrative and, as Jean-François Lyotard has explained, postmodernism is characterized fundamentally by its "incredulity toward meta-narratives."

Nonetheless, I can't see how postmodern critics can do otherwise than accept the value of preserving the nonhuman world. The nonhuman is the extreme "other"; it stands in contradistinction to humans as a species. In understanding the constructed quality of human experience and the dangers of reification, postmodernism inherently advances an ethic of respecting the "other." At the very least, respect must involve ensuring that the "other" actually continues to exist. In our day and age, this requires us to take responsibility for protecting the actuality of the nonhuman. Instead, however, we are running roughshod over the earth's diversity of plants, animals, and ecosystems. Postmodern critics should find this particularly disturbing. If they don't, they deny

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their own intellectual insights and compromise their fundamental moral commitment.

NOW, WHAT does this mean for politics and policy, and the future of the environmental movement? Society is constantly being asked to address questions of environmental quality for which there are no easy answers. As we wrestle with challenges of global climate change, ozone depletion, loss of biological diversity, and so forth, we need to consider the economic, political, cultural, and aesthetic values at stake. These considerations have traditionally marked the politics of environmental protection. A sensitivity to eco-criticism requires that we go further and include an ethic of otherness in our deliberations. That is, we need to be moved by our concern to make room for the "other" and hence fold a commitment to the nonhuman world into our policy discussions. I don't mean that this argument should drive all our actions or that respect for the "other" should always carry the day. But it must be a central part of our reflections and calculations. For example, as we estimate the number of people that a certain area can sustain, consider what to do about climate change, debate restrictions on ocean fishing, or otherwise assess the effects of a particular course of action, we must think about the lives of other creatures on the earth—and also the continued existence of the nonliving physical world. We must do so not because we wish to maintain what is "natural" but because we wish to act in a morally respectable manner.

I have been using postmodern cultural criticism against itself. Yes, the postmodernists are right: we can do what we want with the nonhuman world. There is nothing essential about the realm of rocks, trees, fish, and climate that calls for a certain type of action. But postmodernists are also right that the only ethical way to act in a world that is socially constructed is to respect the voices of the others—of those with whom we share the planet but with whom we may not share a common language or outlook. There is, in other words, a limit or guiding principle to our actions. As political theorist Leslie Thiele puts it, "One can't argue for the diversity of views of 'nature' without taking a stand for the diversity of nature."

This same point was made, though in a very different idiom, a half century ago by Aldo Leopold. Speaking of his proposed "land ethic" (which he hoped would serve as a general principle for thinking about and acting in the natural world), Leopold wrote:

> In short, a land ethic changes the role of homo sapiens from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members, and also respect for community as such. In human history, we have learned (I hope) that the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating. Why? Because it is implicit in such a role that the conqueror knows (ex cathedra) just what makes the community clock tick, and just what and who is valuable and what and who is worthless in community life. It always turns out that he knows neither, and this is why his conquests eventually defeat themselves. ●

PAUL WAPNER is associate professor and director of the Global Environmental Policy Program at American University.

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The Cold War: What Needs to Be Rethought?

Norman Birnbaum

JEFFREY C. ISAAC'S review of Frances Stoner Saunders's *The Cultural Cold War* ("Rethinking the Cultural Cold War," Summer 2002) argues, in effect, that the end justifies the means. The end was the cause of liberal anticommunism. The means was the covert collaboration by any number of eminent intellectuals in several countries with the Central Intelligence Agency, which funded and guided the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

The argument is dubious. Certainly, figures such as Raymon Aron, Daniel Bell, Isaiah Berlin, Sidney Hook, and Edward Shils did not need to have the CIA call their attention to the fact that Stalinist politics were repugnant. They used the funds placed at their disposition in ways that were hardly conspicuous for spiritual disinterestedness. They established networks of patronage from which intellectual adversaries were systematically excluded. Many of the other figures involved in the operation were egregious intriguers and strivers, mediocrities for whom the CIA's money was a godsend. One understands why Irving Howe termed the whole thing a racket.

There is a further point. The CCF established canons of political respectability that narrowed western political discourse. The votaries of liberal anticommunism indulged in a western triumphalism that was utterly sterile. Their work ignored the inner contradictions in the Soviet bloc and reinforced a monolithic image of communism congenial to the cold war apparatus. Treating those who thought differently as willfully or stupidly blind, eccentrics, heretics, utopians, or traitors, they made a major contribution to sustaining policies that may well have prolonged the cold war by several decades.

Isaac's closing reference to the need for caution about criticism in contemporary politics, especially after September 11, 2001, could be read as a call for the rest of us to think only when standing at attention. Perhaps, rigorous liberal that he is, he will wish to reconsider. ●

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Paul Buhle

JEFFREY C. ISAAC'S "Rethinking the Cultural Cold War" (Summer, 2002) offers a welcome opening for discussion in an area that, rather like radical views of the ecological crisis until a few years ago, has seemed largely off limits in *Dissent*. One can agree or disagree with his points, especially his implication that the cold war liberals were also defending freedom across the CIA-beleaguered third world, that the liberals somehow tricked the agency into supporting a democratic agenda definitely not in its monumental human-rights abusing, war-criminal nature from Asia and Africa to Latin America, and that they opposed its agenda there until Vietnam. I've always thought that Irving Howe acted most eloquently by keeping his distance on this and other matters. But in any case, the discussion needs to go much further. Briefly, we should explore the following points.

1. **The cultural Iron Curtain at home**: I know of no cases where the Congress for Cultural Freedom or the American Committee for Cultural Freedom defended that extraordinar-

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ily talented and often prestigious group of American writers, musicians, painters, lyricists, and so on, including the hundreds of Hollywood victims driven from their professions by the blacklist or the less formal graylist. Just here, support for cultural freedom might have made a real difference. ACCFers could surely have launched a powerful protest. They might even have appeared on the picket-line for Television Writers of America, a union busted for refusing to blacklist its own members. Although differences surfaced within the ACCF in the middle 1950s (some urged a new and updated blacklist, others demurred), the silence of the group on these matters is awfully eloquent. One of the most talented victims scorned, by the way, was E.Y. "Yip" Harburg, whose wise and witty lyrics served as source for a *Dissent* fundraiser a few years ago.

2. **Trajectory**: Isaac writes as if the issues concerned only the intellectual or political life of the 1950s-1960s. Far from it. The International Association for Cultural Freedom did not close its doors and stop dispensing secret funds until 1979. If its savants did not all become neoconservatives, as Isaac properly notes, we can safely say that Irving Kristol (among other Kristols) would be a nonentity without a background in the CCF/ACCF. The elder Kristol's connections here gave him the entry into the neoconservative foundations that have so heavily influenced talk shows and dialogue in Washington—now more than ever. In an intimately related issue, the AFL-CIO virtually abandoned domestic policy and was dragged down until 1995 by the agendas of ruthless intelligence operatives, notably Irving Brown, who played central roles in the early CCF and long afterward continued his work—as Nelson Mandela's enemy and Jonas Savimbi's number one backer. And so on. It's a field day for conspiracy theory from Washington to Guatemala City, Saigon and Santo Domingo to Kabul and even Baghdad, because the evidence around figures such as Allen Dulles and William Casey is so thick and their connections to CCF bigshots so intimate. In short, we need to learn a lot more about these "spooks" and their intellectual connections.

3. **Secrecy**: If there is nothing shameful about the past that Isaac describes, then why in the world has there been so much effort to keep it secret? As Frances Stoner Saunders notes, Isaiah Berlin pleaded with his fellow CCFers *not* to write revealing memoirs. He evidently had good reason. We, on the contrary, rather urgently wish to know who knew (and who simply did not want to know because their suspicions were correct) and when they knew it about the Company's pet journal *Encounter* and all the rest.

4. **Scholarship**: Of the thousand or more volumes thought to be underwritten by secret CIA money, surely not all concerned art criticism. On the contrary, those in my field seem to have centered on just the issues that the CIA wanted to rationalize and justify with its own views, from the history of the American left to the recent past in global policies.

It seems to me that we want very much to know which volumes these are, and the processes by which the decisions were made to fund which publications and which authors. For this evidence, we need serious research, wide-open files of the pertinent organizations, and candor from the former leading intellectuals still around. We should be arguing about the ideas expressed, as Isaac says. But what sort of Marxists would we be to forget the material base for their diffusion and the advantages consequently enjoyed, from public access to academic appointments, book-writing leaves, and so on, by insiders over heretics? More to the point, now that the civil liberties climate looks more and more like 1950—when every peacenik opponent of domestic militarization, weapons programs, and multiple foreign operations was liable to be depicted as an Enemy of America—we really do need a new society for cultural freedom. But not one on the Company tab. ●

PAUL BUHLE teaches at Brown University and most recently is co-editor of *Radical Hollywood*; *Insurgent Images*; and an anthology, *The New Left Revisited*.

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Jeffrey C. Isaac Responds

I HAVE NO interest in rehashing the intramural disputes of postwar intellectuals or in scoring easy polemical points. As someone too young to be much exercised by Old Left battles of the fifties or New Left battles of the sixties—and as someone who had long been drawn to the kind of New Left revisionism to which Norman Birnbaum seems still wedded—I am interested in revisiting the past seriously, in the light of my own efforts to understand the present. My essay makes clear that Congress for Cultural Freedom affiliates could be petty, that cold war liberalism was flawed by its (understandable) Eurocentric obsessions, and that many cold war liberals contributed to a narrowing of political discourse. But it also makes clear that many cold war liberals articulated important ideas and stood for important things, *and* that the liberalism of the cold war period was internally complex. The narrowing of discourse was regrettable and tragic, but to reduce this to patronage networks and CIA machinations is foolish—and to imply that most of the intellectuals associated with the CCF were witting accomplices of the CIA is unfair. In my essay, I praise the New Left critiques of the CIA's covert involvement.

There are nonetheless serious questions to be raised about when it is legitimate for intellectuals to accept state funding—as most of us working in universities, including Birnbaum, have done in one way or another—and whether and when such funding might legitimately be covert (would Birnbaum be outraged, for example, were it to turn out that in 1968 the CIA gave money to support Czech *samizdat* publications? Would he maintain that intellectuals who accepted such support would be hacks unless the support were publicly acknowledged?). Finally, Birnbaum willfully misreads my final paragraphs, which are about difficult choices and how to wrestle with them, and *not* about bringing everyone into line with my choices, much less with the policies of the George W. Bush's administration. I treasure political argument and feel fortunate to live in a society where people are relatively free to publish critiques of the state and even of me. And I have never understood how to "stand at attention." It is beneath Birnbaum to recur to the absurd notion that writers challenging left shibboleths aspire to become thought police or to inhibit public debate.

IT IS HARD to know how to respond to Paul Buhle's letter, for although some of the questions he raises are important, it is less than clear to me how his manner of raising them responds in any way to my essay on the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

If Buhle thinks that I claimed that the CIA, or those intellectuals aligned with it, defended freedom across the third world, then I suggest that he re-read my essay, which maintains that the Eurocentrism of many Congress intellectuals explains "the difficulties many of them had in recognizing the counterrevolutionary role being played by American foreign policy in the newly labeled third world." In a similar vein, I did not argue that Congress liberals "tricked" the CIA. I suggested that the convergence of the agendas of these liberals and the CIA, especially in a war-ravaged Europe, is something complicated, interesting, and worthy of further investigation. For the record, I have never sought to apologize for any of the terrible things the CIA has done. But I do not consider it a "war crime" for an agency of the U.S. government, even one so rightly criticized as the CIA, to have offered financial and logistical support to intellectual and civic groups seeking to challenge the influence of communist organizations in Paris or Prague. Buhle's entire letter bespeaks a nostalgia for a time when many on the left could imagine that communist movements were somehow "progressive," and their opponents thereby "reactionary." I find any such nostalgia worse than distasteful.

I do not know whether any Congress liberals walked TWA picket lines. I do know that some prominent ACCF-associated intellectuals—Dwight Macdonald, Mary McCarthy, Richard Rovere—did speak out forcefully against McCarthyism in all of its dimensions, including the blacklists. I cannot understand why

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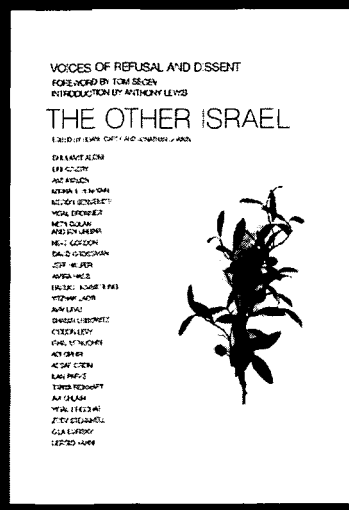
"It is possible and even necessary to be critical of the policies of one's government without being considered a traitor."
—Daniel Barenboim



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Foreword by Tom Segev
Introduction by Anthony Lewis

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Buhle, a respected historian, would misleadingly describe such efforts as simply "demurring" about an updated blacklist, when he knows better than this.

Of course the CCF's many legacies persist (and its legacies were multiple). My essay offered no apologia for Irving Kristol (or his son) or Irving Brown, much less for Allen Dulles or William Casey. But it did insist that the cold war liberal intellectuals associated with the Congress—even Kristol, who is an intellectual, whether one agrees with him or not—were intellectuals and not "spooks," that it is historically wrong to reduce their activity to "covert operations," that these intellectuals disagreed with each other about many important things, and that these disagreements are worth understanding.

Buhle has every right to want to know all the dirt on the CIA. I support the Freedom of Information Act and believe that there is much more that remains to be told about CIA activities and perhaps even about the Congress. But Buhle's conspiracy thinking, and his insistence on "knowing who knew," seeing all the files, and so on, has an inquisitional tone that I do not think is intended to be ironic, and that brings to mind other forms of cold war inquisition, as practiced by Joe McCarthy but also by his more powerful counterparts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Buhle seems incapable of coming to terms with the fact that cold war liberals had views different from his own, and that, right or wrong, these were differences of opinion. Instead, he insists on seeing them as signs of covert influence or moral turpitude. In this way he avoids any consideration of the serious ethical-political dilemmas that confronted liberal and left intellectuals who believed, with good reason, that communism was malevolent and ought to be opposed. Only by refusing to take seriously what these people thought, wrote, and said can he do this. ●

JEFFREY C. ISAAC's most recent book is *Democracy in Hard Times*.

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The U.S. Role in the Four Wars

James B. Rule

I APPRECIATE many of Michael Walzer's thoughts on current Israeli-Palestinian conflicts ("The Four Wars of Israel/Palestine," Fall 2002)—a topic on which he and I have often had trouble seeing eye-to-eye. The best part of his message is his insistence that any decent solution of this tangled struggle requires both parties to renounce their fantasies of suppression or physical removal of "the wrong kind of people" on the other side.

I have disagreements, too, many of them predictable. But what I want to share is more a reaction to what is *missing* in the essay than to anything asserted there. Reading it, one might almost conclude that Israel charts its strategy against the Palestinians strictly on its own, without external sponsorship. Of course, we know the opposite—for both sides. Michael quite rightly warns those influencing the Palestinians—upholding, exhorting, berating, excusing, and bankrolling—to weigh their actions, lest they share the awful responsibility for Palestinian misdeeds. But at the same time, Israel is utterly dependent on support from the United States. Americans need to take the same critical stance toward our own involvement.

For us on the American left—indeed, for all fair-minded Americans—this country's sponsorship of Israel has to give great pause. None of the unconscionable Israeli policies that have exacerbated the recent chapters of this conflict would have been possible without the vast American military and financial support to that country—the latter alone now running to nearly two billion dollars annually. *Dissent* readers would certainly disagree on what any list of unacceptable Israeli policies should include; apparently mine is not exactly the same as Michael Walzer's. But the two of us seem to agree that Israeli colonization of territory beyond the "Green Line" is one of them. This outrageous encroachment of Israeli domination is simply, appallingly, absolutely wrong. The worst is what it says about Israelis' concept of themselves and their nation in relation to other people. "The Four Wars . . ." is properly explicit on this point. What conclusions would we in *Dissent* draw about any other country in the world that was slowly, self-consciously extending its boundaries, occupying lands, and claiming the resources of neighboring peoples—and depicting that process as a matter of manifest national destiny? Yet the American government continues to condone these policies, greeting them publicly with "tut-tuts" that convince no one.

Americans should be insisting that their country suspend support for Israel as long as such unconscionable policies remain in place. Use of our tax dollars to bankroll actions bound to inflame this already intractable situation is as bad as this country's tacit support a few years ago for equally outrageous policies in El Salvador, Chile, or South Africa. The grave responsibility of Palestinians and their allies for intolerable actions on the other side should have no bearing on American support for Israel's colonial mission. Unlike the case with Israel, *we Americans aren't paying* for the suicide bombings and other outrages from the Palestinian side. Our own responsibilities stand in proportion to the role of our own resources in underwriting Israeli actions. This, accordingly, is where we should apply our most urgent efforts. We have to stop thinking of American support for Israel as an invariant fact of life and take a hard look at our own role in abetting it.

A credible American threat to suspend support to Israel until it eliminates all civilian encroachments beyond the "Green Line" would

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dramatically change perceptions of this country all around the world. It might, not incidentally, help reduce the worldwide outpourings of hatred now so widely directed at this country. But the main reason why people like us should be insisting on such a stance is that the policy of encroachment, and the vision underlying it, are both destructive to peace prospects and profoundly wrong in themselves. ●

JAMES B. RULE's latest book is *Computing in Organizations: Myth and Experience.*

Michael Walzer Responds

I AGREE WITH Jim Rule on the wrongness of Israeli settlement policy. I don't believe, as he suggests, that ending American support for that policy would reduce hatred for the United States in the Arab and Muslim worlds. People who believe that the Elders of Zion control Wall Street and the U. S. government, and that Israel planned the attack on the Trade Towers, and that the CIA carried out the terrorist bombing in Bali won't be fooled by anything so simple. But we have, as Jim also says, our own reasons for opposing Israeli settlements: the policy of settling the West Bank and Gaza is destructive to any peace process and wrong in itself.

A unilateral end to U.S. financial support for Israel, however, won't advance the peace process. It makes sense to call for American pressure on right-wing Israeli governments—and, specifically, for reductions in aid to match whatever amounts of money any Israeli government spends on settlements in the occupied territories. But Israel is a country with real enemies; its military dominance, while substantial at this moment, is also precarious; and its enemies are not looking for a two-state solution. Israel remains dependent on American support for its survival, not (only) for its expansion, and any radical break in this alliance is more likely to provoke an Arab attack than to bring peace closer.

Peacemaking requires a more subtle and nuanced American policy than Jim Rule advocates in his response to my piece. And it also requires a more subtle and nuanced American left than has been in evidence in recent antiwar demonstrations and in the campus campaign for divestment from companies doing business in Israel. The first sign of a decent left on this issue would be an acknowledgment that there is strong opposition to settlement policy in Israel and strong support for a two-state solution. If leftists here (and in Europe) really favor two states, and not just one, they should look for an alliance with the Israeli left—and also, if they can find it, with the Palestinian left. There is important nongovernmental work to be done, political and ideological work that could strengthen the cause of peace. ●

MICHAEL WALZER is co-editor of *Dissent.*

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THE EDITORS

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"My Mother, Drunk or Sober"

George Orwell on Nationalism and Patriotism

Joanne Barkan

LIKE A FEW million other people, I consider George Orwell one of my favorite political writers, but I don't riffle through his books, looking for wisdom whenever a political crisis comes along. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, however, I did reach for a volume of his essays, specifically the volume that contains his 1945 "Notes on Nationalism." I hadn't read the essay in years, but I thought the distinction Orwell makes between nationalism and patriotism might be useful in thinking about the "blame-America-first" part of the American left. These leftists see only one major problem in the world: the United States with its unlimited power and imperial arrogance. Their initial response to the terrorist attacks: "We had it coming."

More than a year after 9/11, a greater number and variety of voices on the left admit that blame-America-first failed miserably as a response. First, it relied almost exclusively on "blowback" to explain the atrocities: American imperialism understandably generates so much hate for us around the world that some of the haters inevitably turn to mass terrorism. Everything else is left out: no analysis of the Wahhabi brand of fundamentalist Islam, no consideration of the lack of democracy in Arab Muslim nations or the loss of dignity associated with economic underdevelopment or the role of religious brainwashing. Second, blame-America-first leftists have an ingrained ideological aversion to patriotism. They assume it means either a sheeplike loyalty—"my country, right or wrong"—or an aggressive nationalism. They made their disdain for the outpouring of patriotism after 9/11 clear. Some of us saw the desire to fly American flags everywhere as a sign of solidarity and grief (we saw this even when we ourselves didn't care to fly a flag). They saw only jingoism and vulgar sentimentality.

No one knows what proportion of the U.S. left has this Johnny-one-note politics (where do you draw the borders of the left?). But blame-America-first often seems to dominate the left's public presence—in the media, on campuses, on the lecture circuit. It also represents the left in the popular imagination, where it wins over few hearts and minds. A politics so deeply alienated from a nation can't attract its citizens. Because the inability to distinguish between nationalism and patriotism is part of that alienation, I decided to reread "Notes on Nationalism."

The essay begins with definitions of nationalism and patriotism and Orwell's warning not to confuse the terms "since two different and even opposing ideas are involved":

> By "nationalism" . . . I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests. . . .By "patriotism" I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force upon other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power.

Orwell analyzed nationalism by classifying the various attitudes of the English intelligentsia—he considered intellectuals the best source of data: "In them, much more often than in ordinary English people, [nationalism] is unmixed with patriotism and can therefore be studied pure." His idiosyncratic notion of nationalism went far beyond the identification with a particular nation to include zealotry of almost any kind. Communism, political Catholicism, color feeling, class feeling, pacifism, Christendom, Islam, and Jewry (all his terms) qualified as in-

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stances of nationalism along with the more conventional Celtic nationalism, Zionism, and neo-Toryism. He also created a subcategory called "negative nationalism" for attachments that "work in a merely negative sense, *against* something or other and without the need for any positive object of loyalty." Negative identifications counted as "nationalism" because they exhibited two core characteristics: obsessiveness and the ability to ignore inconvenient truths. Orwell put anti-Semitism, Trotskyism, and Anglophobia into this subcategory.

Ironically, today's blame-America-first leftists, who undoubtedly consider themselves too enlightened to stumble into jingoism, think exactly like Orwell's negative nationalists: they are obsessive and undiscriminating in their anti-Americanism, but they no longer wave anyone else's flag. Orwell's description of Anglophobia in the 1940s fits their attitude: "Within the intelligentsia, a derisive and mildly hostile attitude towards Britain is more or less compulsory, but it is an unfaked emotion in many cases. . . . English left-wing intellectuals did not, of course, actually want the Germans or Japanese to win the war, but many of them could not help getting a certain kick out of seeing their own country humiliated . . . "

ALTHOUGH Orwell made his distinction between nationalism and patriotism clear in "Notes," the essay says nothing about the possible forms or content of patriotism; it doesn't provide any insights into the components or style of leftist patriotism. Since Orwell's own politics are so often identified with patriotism, I decided to go back to the story of his ideological transformation.

After fighting for six months on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, Orwell returned to England in June 1937 embittered by the experience. As he saw it, almost all the political forces on the Republican side—liberals, socialists, and, above all, Moscow-directed communists—conspired to abort a working class uprising; they opened the way for a fascist victory which, in the end, they dreaded less than an authentic but autonomous revolution. Bidding a pox on all their houses, Orwell joined the anti-imperialist/anti-war camp, and for the next two years, he argued that fascism did not differ fundamentally from capitalism, and Hitler was no worse than the British imperialists. He aimed his polemics at the Popular Front, defined by Orwell as "a line-up of capitalist and proletarian for the ostensible purpose of opposing Fascism" or, more succinctly, "an unholy alliance between the robbers and the robbed." He believed that, sooner or later, this alliance would drag England into a war with Germany, a war he opposed. In his own words:

> Fascism after all is only a development of capitalism, and the mildest democracy, so-called, is liable to turn into Fascism when the pinch comes. We like to think of England as a democratic country, but our rule in India, for instance, is just as bad as German Fascism, though outwardly it may be less irritating. I do not see how one can oppose Fascism except by working for the overthrow of capitalism, starting, of course, in one's own country. If one collaborates with a capitalist-imperialist government in a struggle "against Fascism," i.e. against a rival imperialism, one is simply letting Fascism in by the back door. The whole struggle in Spain, on the [Republican] Government side, has turned upon this. (Letter to Geoffrey Gorer, September 15, 1937)

No patriotism here. None of the nice cups of tea, homey suet puddings, or red pillar-boxes that Orwell later relied on to communicate his identification with the English people. Thinking about England in the years just preceding the Second World War meant thinking primarily about the misdeeds of its capitalist-imperialist government.

This was not Orwell's finest hour. Given what was happening in the German Reich and in the Far East, his fascism-equals-capitalism worldview had enough obsessiveness and delusions to qualify as a "negative nationalism." Of course, few people did much better in the late 1930s. What surprises is how long Orwell hung on to this myopic position. He expected England to go fascist, but from within, steered by an alliance of the British right and left. As late as March 1939, he was prodding his comrades to stockpile supplies for an underground resistance to the upcoming British regime. In a letter to the writer Herbert Read:

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> So long as the objective, real or pretended, is war with Germany, the greater part of the Left will associate themselves with the fascising [*sic*] process, which will ultimately mean associating themselves with wage-reductions, suppression of free speech, brutalities in the colonies etc . . . .I doubt whether there is much hope of saving England from fascism of one kind or another, but clearly one must put up a fight, and it seems silly to be silenced when one might be making a row merely because one had failed to take a few precautions beforehand. If we laid in printing presses etc in some discreet place we could then cautiously go to work to get together a distributing agency, and we could then feel "Well, if trouble does come we are ready."

By Orwell's account, nothing in his thinking changed much until the early morning hours of August 21, 1939. He went to bed with one politics and got up with another. In between there was the transformational dream. Orwell wrote about the experience in "My Country Right or Left" (published in autumn 1940):

> For several years the coming war was a nightmare to me, and at times I even made speeches and wrote pamphlets against it. But the night before the Russo-German pact was announced I dreamed that the war had started. It was one of those dreams which, whatever Freudian inner meaning they may have, do sometimes reveal to you the real state of your feelings. It taught me two things, first, that I should be simply relieved when the long-dreaded war started, secondly, that I was patriotic at heart, would not sabotage or act against my own side, would support the war, would fight in it if possible. I came downstairs to find the newspaper announcing Ribbentrop's flight to Moscow. So war was coming, and the Government, even the Chamberlain Government, was assured of my loyalty.

Some Orwell readers regard the dream as a literary device rather than an actual event. Either way it is an accurate account of what happened to Orwell's thinking: this was an about-face, a real or metaphoric overnight conversion. Why that night? For Orwell, the Hitler-Stalin Pact transformed the balance of force, putting England at tremendous risk. The Nazis overrunning the British Isles suddenly looked feasible. Writing about the near future in the same essay, Orwell chose to qualify his predictions with the words "if only we can keep Hitler out" and "if only we can hang on." Before the pact, the prospect of war with Germany didn't seem to threaten England's survival (although he might have changed his mind if a war had actually started). As soon as Hitler and Stalin made a deal, he could picture the destruction of "English-speaking civilization." In *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1940), he wrote, "Two incompatible visions of life are fighting one another," and as a result, there was only one question to answer: "Do you want to see England conquered, or don't you?"

WATCHING THE twin towers collapse and the Pentagon burn on 9/11, most Americans (including part of the left) instinctively felt that their way of life and shared values were threatened. It wasn't the overwhelming and imminent threat of a foreign army poised for the kind of war Europeans knew so well, but within a few hours of the terrorist attacks, everyone had enough information about al-Qaeda cells, suicide manuals, and mass murder as a shortcut to paradise to understand the danger. It seemed natural to feel patriotic—protective as well as proud of the best in our national culture—in much the same way Orwell did. When, instead, some leftists responded primarily with the rhetorical question, "Don't you think we deserved it?" they came across as morally, politically, and intellectually deficient. But something emotional was also askew. People outside the left have called it "lack of patriotism," which is a misleading phrase because it carries overtones of treason. A better description focuses on the rancorous and self-destructive alienation from the rest of the country.

Orwell had much the same thing to say about England's intelligentsia (which he considered almost exclusively left-wing). For example, from *The Lion and the Unicorn*: "England is perhaps the only great country whose intellectuals are ashamed of their own nationality," and "There is little in [left publications] except the irresponsible carping of people who have never been and never expect to be in a position of power." Or from "Boys' Weeklies":

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"Failure to understand [the patriotism of ordinary people] is one of the reasons why left-wing political parties are seldom able to produce an acceptable foreign policy." At the same time, Orwell felt obliged to demonstrate that patriotism was not conservative; one could be both a leftist and patriotic. In part he needed to explain his own sudden conversion; in part he had to reconnect two identities that had become separated after the First World War to the point of seeming mutually exclusive. He came up with the following formula in "My Country Right or Left" and reiterated it in *The Lion and the Unicorn*: "Patriotism has nothing to do with conservatism. It is devotion to something that is changing but is felt to be mystically the same . . . [W]hen the red militias [of the socialist revolution] are billeted in the Ritz I shall still feel that the England I was taught to love so long ago and for such different reasons is somehow persisting."

WHO KNOWS if this argument persuaded many leftists in the 1940s? Some leftists today find patriotism repellent not so much because it implies conserving what exists but because, for them, it means endorsing a superpower whose unlimited power and arrogance they detest. The rest of us see no inherent or necessary contradiction between left politics and patriotic feeling; on the contrary, left politics seems especially in tune with America's (yet-to-be-realized) ideals. But does the patriotism of leftists have a distinct form?

For Orwell, patriotism meant fond attachment to what you think is distinctive about your country, its "flavor." His England had greener grass, solid breakfasts, smoky towns, winding roads, red pillar-boxes, respect for the law, and addiction to hobbies. But equally characteristic was the willingness to fight and die when England was "in a serious jam." All this was politically neutral; any English person, left or right, might have drawn up a similar list. But even if Orwell's attachments looked conventional, he never gave up his critical option. Dissent did not conflict with patriotism. Unlike some of his interlocutors during the war, Orwell rejected "My country, right or wrong" as a test of patriotism. He made short shrift of the idea by citing conservative author G.K. Chesterton "who courageously opposed the Boer War, and once remarked that 'My country, right or wrong' was on the same moral level as 'My mother, drunk or sober'" ("As I Please," December 24, 1943). Only critical patriotism was palatable to Orwell, but it could be found among both leftists and conservatives. Similarly, "My country, right or wrong" was neither conservative nor left wing, it was simply mindless.

Orwell's concern with patriotism coincided with the war years. Practically everything he wrote on the subject was written between 1939 and 1945, and he invariably elaborated on three observations: first, although the upper, middle, and working classes had different styles of patriotism, they all rallied to the nation's defense; second, without the resolute patriotism of the English people, England would lose the war; and third, only left intellectuals lacked patriotism. When the war ended, Orwell expected the active patriotism of his fellow citizens to return to a more latent state, and his own emotion changed in the same way. After 1945 he continued to write about nationalism, but the theme of patriotism disappeared from the essays. The organization of "Notes on Nationalism" marks the transition. Written in May 1945 just as the war in Europe ended, "Notes" begins with both patriotism and nationalism, but then patriotism drops out. Orwell moves on to classify examples of nationalism, including the Stalinist communism (a type of "transferred nationalism") that he wrote about until his death in 1950.

I never found what I had started to search for in "Notes"—ideas about a distinctly left-wing patriotism. (Perhaps benign patriotism remains essentially the same wherever it resides on the political spectrum.) But coming across the notion of "negative nationalism" again has been useful for thinking about the blame-America-first leftists with their obsessiveness, resentments, and ability to shut out inconvenient realities. The last paragraph of "Notes" alone makes the essay well worth rereading.

> As for the nationalistic loves and hatreds that I have spoken of, they are part of the make-up of most of us, whether we like it or not. Whether it is possible to get rid of them I do not know, but I do believe that it is possible to struggle against them, and that this is es-

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sentially a *moral* effort. It is a question first of all of discovering what one really is, what one's own feelings really are, and then of making allowance for the inevitable bias. If you hate and fear Russia, if you are jealous of the wealth and power of America, if you despise Jews, if you have a sentiment of inferiority towards the British ruling class, you cannot get rid of those feelings simply by taking thought. But you can at least recognize that you have them, and prevent them from contaminating your mental processes. The emotional urges which are inescapable, and are perhaps even necessary to political action, should be able to exist side by side with an acceptance of reality. But this, I repeat, needs a *moral* effort, and contemporary English literature, so far as it is alive at all to the major issues of our time, shows how few of us are prepared to make it.

The paragraph has an authentic ring because Orwell himself made the moral effort, again and again, to discover his own aversions and to keep them from contaminating his thinking. Of course he wasn't completely successful. Who ever is? But his enduring appeal depends just as much on this moral effort and the tough independence it produced as on his famously engaging writing style.

The time is long overdue for an examination of the left's negative nationalism. This need doesn't disappear just because we also need to fight the Bush administration's reckless unilateralism abroad and its assault on liberty and social justice at home. On the contrary, the worse the government in Washington (and the current one is execrable), the more urgent the need for an effective left. Examining your own biases and preventing them from "contaminating your mental processes" are intrinsic to radical thought. The viability of the left depends on these practices because critical thinking and the commitment of activists are our side's most valuable resources; the other side has wealth and power. It takes more mental energy as well as a sense of balance to think critically while acting politically, but that's what makes a decent left. ●

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The Importance of Being Lucid

Yehudah Mirsky

JIHAD: THE TRAIL OF POLITICAL ISLAM
by Gilles Kepel
Harvard University Press, 2002 454 pp $29.95

UNHOLY WAR:
TERROR IN THE NAME OF ISLAM
by John L. Esposito
Oxford University Press, 2002 196 pp $25

POLITICAL ISLAM is all the rage. But is the rage all of political Islam? Since bursting into Western consciousness with the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the cluster of movements and figures of Islamism and political Islam have been variously an inspiration and a terror—and regularly both to many—a political football in sundry regional conflicts, a challenge to their governments, a vexation to Western policymakers, and last and least, a boon to academics. The Islamists' potential for wreaking massive havoc and suffering well beyond their accustomed frontiers was made clear to all, or should have been, by the events of September 11, 2001.

One may discern several streams in the rivers of ink flowing around political Islam: the argument that political Islam, and its terrorism in particular, represent a backlash against globalization, an argument put together most intelligently and presciently in Benjamin Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld* and burlesqued today by the pseudo-analyses of Noam Chomsky; the clash of civilizations thesis, famously, or infamously, associated with Samuel Huntington; those who see Islamist organizations as the stirrings of a nascent civil society akin to that which developed in Central and Eastern Europe under the Soviets; those, chief among them Bernard Lewis and his students, who see Islamists as dangerous and unreformable authoritarians; students of comparative religion, among them many contributors to the University of Chicago's outstanding multi-volume *Fundamentalisms Project*, understandably fascinated by the ironies and complexities of thoroughgoingly modern movements claiming the mantle of tradition; and of course, the now-hegemonic postmodern academic discourse founded by Edward Said's *Orientalism*, perhaps best understood as an academic Gnostic eschatology, which, like other Gnostic messianisms, easily becomes an apologetics of violence.

The life or death significance of these discussions has never been clearer to the United States and its allies since September 11. And so Gilles Kepel's powerful study of political Islam is all the more welcome. A professor of Middle East Studies at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris, Kepel's synthesis of sociological understanding, historical explanation, and journalistic immediacy recalls that of Raymond Aron, along with the latter's lucid distinctions between pseudo-democratic progressive rhetoric, and the real thing. Though not without its flaws, his is likely the single most valuable and helpful volume on political Islam today, made all the more so by his ability to make adroit use of sociological analysis and yet elude the thrall of theory.

His story begins with the various nationalist and postcolonial regimes that emerged in the postwar years and their inability to fashion coherent national identities or viable economies. Scarcely legitimate in the eyes of their people, yet for the most part stubbornly impervious to change, these regimes have confounded conventional notions, which, Kepel writes: "have tended to equate . . . modernization with secularization. But nowhere in the Muslim world of the late 1960s did religion vanish from popular culture, social life or day-

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to-day politics. Islam was merely handled in different ways by different regimes, and was combined with nationalism in ways that varied according to the social class of those who had seized power at the moment of independence."

Since the end of the nineteenth century, various Muslim intellectuals and organizations, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood, had attempted to articulate an alternative to Western-style modernity, through a reassertion of a reinvigorated Islam as the guiding principle of a new social order. These ideas gained renewed attraction as the regimes stagnated. Thus, as Kepel says in a passage worth quoting at length:

> By the early 1970s . . . two social groups were particularly susceptible to Islamist persuasion. One was the huge mass of urban young poor from deprived backgrounds whose parents had come in from the country. The other was the devout bourgeoisie, a class excluded from political power and economically hemmed in by military and monarchical regimes. These two groups were both committed to the *sharia* [traditional Islamic law] and to the idea of an Islamic state, but they did not view that state in quite the same way. The former imbued it with a social-revolutionary content, while the latter saw it as a vehicle for wresting power for themselves from the incumbent elites, without fundamentally disturbing the existing social hierarchies.
>
> This divergence of interests lies at the very heart of contemporary Islamism. The Islamist intelligentsia's role was to gloss over this clash of social agendas and reconcile the two groups to the shared pursuit of power. The intellectuals did this by concentrating on the moral and cultural dimensions of religion. They won the broadest base of support—and in Iran it was broad enough to carry them to power—when they mobilized both the young urban poor and the devout bourgeoisie with an ideology that offered a vague social agenda but a sharp focus on morality . . . On the other hand, wherever the coalition between the young urban poor and the devout bourgeoisie dissolved, the more radical and more moderate elements cancelled one another out and the Islamist movement failed to seize power . . . .The essential contradiction between the radical goals of the young urban poor and the conservative goals of the bourgeoisie . . . lurked behind the apparently united front of Islamism . . .

Taking in hand this illuminating focus on the interactions of young urban poor, devout middle class, and Islamist intelligentsia in their ongoing struggles with failed nationalist regimes, Kepel walks through a close study of political Islam's fortunes throughout the Muslim world: in Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Algeria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Turkey, as well as Islamist politics in Western Europe. Merely listing these countries highlights the problem with simply equating Muslim with Arab; the Muslim world has been well characterized by Bassam Tibi as "civilizational unity in cultural diversity."

(Though comprehensive, this survey is not exhaustive; those wishing to learn more about the Islamic politics of Central Asia will benefit from the works of Ahmed Rashid, while Yo'av Karny's extraordinary *Highlanders* brings the people of the Caucasus memorably and hauntingly alive. Elsewhere, the secular totalitarians of Syria and Iraq have massacred and tortured whatever genuine Islamist critics they may once have had and, being what they are, have scarcely any internal politics of whatever kind to speak of.)

In looking at the past decades, Kepel sees a trajectory of rise and fall; as nationalist regimes became increasingly discredited, by their own failures at state-building and their disastrous defeat by Israel in 1967, Islamists, educated and socialized in a network of Saudi-funded mosques and madrasas expounding reactionary Wahhabism, bid for social and political primacy. Yet time after time, Islamists proved unable to take or maintain a hold on power, not only because of the resourcefulness and ruthlessness of their opponents, but due to the inherent instability of the social base upon which Islamism has tried to raise its dreams.

Islamism achieved its first and most dramatic victory in the Iranian revolution of 1979, which found, in the person of Ayatollah Khomeini, a charismatic leader who was able "to overcome the social divisions of (Islamism's) base and attract the whole society." This turned

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out to be less a synthesis than a conjurer's trick: "Khomeini allowed each group to invest the movement with its own particular political dreams, which were not dispelled until the purges began in the aftermath of victory." The Iranian revolution eventually fostered a hitherto absent element of Islamic politics, as over the course of the Iran-Iraq War, and its appalling losses, "[r]eligious energy was externalized, and its goal was to change the world . . . .The appalling butchery of the eight-year war against Iraq gave the younger generation of poor Iranians an incentive to return to the former tradition of martyrdom . . ."

This revitalized concept of martyrdom also made itself felt in the camps of fighters in Afghanistan, who developed a sense of themselves as the vanguard of an Islamic Internationale while defeating the Soviet Union. "The international brigade of jihad veterans, being outside the control of any state, was suddenly available to serve radical Islamist causes anywhere in the world. Since they were no longer bound by local political contingencies, they had no responsibilities to any social group either. . . . They became the free electrons of jihad, professional Islamists trained to fight and to train others to do likewise."

Through the 1990s, as the regimes showed striking resilience and the Islamists proved unable to effect sustainable social coalitions, they became increasingly radicalized and violent. "The radically different trajectories of the middle classes and the disinherited young became more and more painfully obvious—and as a result the former became vulnerable to attempts by established governments to win them over, while the latter drifted in the direction of violence and terrorism." Thus, Kepel argues, the ascendance of al-Qaeda represents, as the title of the prescient 1994 volume of Olivier Roy had it, the failure of political Islam. In the end, he writes, "[t]he recurrent violence of the decade was above all a reflection of the movement's structural weakness, not its growing strength."

Though the book was first published in France in 2000, Kepel writes in this post-September 11 American edition: "[T]he attack on the United States was a desperate symbol of the isolation, fragmentation and decline of the Islamist movement, not a sign of its strength and irrepressible might . . . .This does not mean that we shall not see other outbursts of terrorism that claim the mantle of jihad. . . . But violence in itself, as we have seen . . . has proven to be a death trap for Islamists as a whole, precluding any capacity to hold and mobilize the range of constituencies they need to seize political power."

Turning to John Esposito's *Unholy War* after Kepel's powerful study, we find a much slimmer volume in every way. Esposito, professor at Georgetown and a leading figure in America's Middle Eastern Studies community, argued in several books through the 1990s that political Islam represented no threat to the West and was indeed a force for democratization in the Arab world. One might think that this leaves him with some explaining to do. Yet in this book he offers no regrets, but rather gamely offers in four brief chapters an introduction to political Islam for the layperson who comes *de novo* to the subject. Esposito's greatest talent, well on display here, has long been his ability to make deeply unfamiliar history and culture strikingly accessible; indeed, his analysis is so determinedly reasonable, so seemingly appealing in its wishing away of severe conflict, so seemingly well-informed, that it takes a moment to realize just how much is left out or glossed over in his narrative of political Islam.

He offers what we may call the *New York Times* version of political Islam, the reassuring story that a nervous liberal elite tells itself: that the anger of its enemies is the understandable response to a long history of victimization, for which it is itself to blame; that if only we properly understood these grievances we would see that our ostensible foes are speaking but another dialect of the political language we call our own; that the answer to these problems lies in the adjustment of our policies to make this all go away. The social work analogy is made explicit when he says that: "Just as among inner city youth in the United States, some of those young people lose all hope . . . for a small minority, suicide bombing seems a proud and powerful response." Why it is that most inner-city youth don't blow themselves up in shop-

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ping malls seems not to be a matter for analysis. Indeed, the only actors he describes are Islamists and the governments who repress them, omitting the urban poor and the merchants who so richly inform Kepel's analysis; and both scant the role of the secular Arab intelligentsia, movingly chronicled in Fouad Ajami's *The Dream Palace of the Arabs,* who have for the most part been so tragically incapable of creating meaningful cultural syntheses for their societies.

And what are the grievances at work? Of course, colonialism, and Esposito rightly observes that nearly all the postcolonial Muslim states carved out by Europe were—and are now—fragile from their births. But above all it is the existence of Israel that has prevented the Muslim world from successfully mastering the challenges of modernity. Rather than arguing this, he simply assumes throughout that the reader will understand why the creation of Israel is such an affront and understandable cause of rage and sorrow as to make healthy rapprochement with the West impossible. (Full disclosure: Esposito recently told the *Times* that a think tank where this reviewer once worked, cheerfully described by the paper as "having close relations with Israel," is "not primarily concerned with what is best for America." Unlike, say, his Palestinian funders at Georgetown.)

His animus toward Israel leads him to a number of what one can only hope are errors of haste: By way of explaining Osama bin Laden's appeal, he writes that "the Palestinians . . . have been living under Israeli military occupation in violation of UN Security Council resolutions for over 40 years," effectively conveying that pre-1967 Israel's existence is itself a violation; he discusses Israel's "crushing victory" and "seiz(ing)" of land in 1967 without mentioning that it was fighting a war of self-defense; astoundingly, he writes that "[t]he increased use of force under the Ariel Sharon government sparked the second intifada, which began in September 2000"—choosing not to remember that the then-prime minister was Ehud Barak, who was offering unprecedented diplomatic concessions at Camp David; he says that Hezbollah fought only until Israel's departure from Southern Lebanon, and is now a mainstream organization devoted to education and social services, an assertion belied by a scan of any morning's newspaper; and he refers to Shaykh Yassin, founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, as a "pragmatist" for his willingness to participate in the Palestinian Authority, notwithstanding his forthrightly consistent refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. Only "[a] small minority," Esposito writes, "continues to espouse violence and terrorism to liberate the whole of Palestine." And on and on. (And how much of this got past the editors at Oxford is its own kind of mystery.)

Now, no sensible person could deny that the creation and persistence of Israel has been a deeply traumatic event for the Arab world, nor that Israel has over the decades committed its generous share of errors and injustices, or even that the destruction of Israel might go a long way toward exorcising some of the angers coursing through the Arab and part of the Muslim world. But simply to accept that as a given, as does Esposito, and to see the existence of Israel as uniquely immoral and demoralizing, fails to explain why it is that Muslims and Arabs, of all the peoples in postcolonial settings, have found themselves unable to live with the idea of Israel or come to a peaceful resolution of their differences, or why their disagreements with U.S. policy should be so much more bitter than those of others around the world.

Although animus toward Israel drives much of Esposito's analysis, he also discusses another pervasively cited issue: "the dangers of Western economic hegemony and its side effects." And, he says, "[t]he Muslim world's dominance by the West and marginalization as a world power, which has challenged Islam's relevance to modern life, and its lack of control over the forces of development, have been daunting barriers to progress." Here, too, yes, the emerging global culture of our time and its driving individualism, not only in economics, but also in politics, culture, and religion is deeply unsettling. It is also very attractive, which is why people in Asia, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union struggle not only to find a place for themselves

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in this new global milieu but to work through its emerging networks and institutions toward a more supple shape of globalization. Again, why the Muslim and Arab worlds should be uniquely, and violently, resistant to globalization, if indeed they are, is left unexplained by Esposito.

Esposito calls for greater cross-cultural dialogue and encouragement of genuinely creative and thoughtful Muslim reformers of today, and who can argue with that? But in the end, his insistence that Muslims are endlessly put upon victims who must endlessly be understood by Western elites, and his unwillingness forthrightly to acknowledge the ills besetting Muslim societies are deeply patronizing. "Democracy," he writes, "is an integral part of modern Islamic political thought and practice, accepted in many Muslim countries as a litmus test by which the openness of government and the relevance of Islamic groups or other political parties are certified." What, in the light of all we have seen in the past years, can this possibly mean, especially when nearly all of today's most creative Muslim thinkers find that they can thrive only in non-Arab states? (Indeed the Muslim reformers he himself discusses—Anwar Ibrahim, Mohammad Khatami and Abdurrahman Wahid—are respectively Malaysian, Iranian, and Indonesian.) The only concrete policy prescription to emerge from Esposito's analysis is, of course, for the United States to distance itself from Israel.

PAINFUL AND complicated though it may be, one can love a language, religion and culture, deeply empathize with its history, grieve for its wounds and losses, and still be willing to fight the evils perpetrated in its name. The civilization created by Islam is indeed a great wonder of the world; yet in a sense, that is nearly beside the point as we confront terror today. Kepel is correct that the political Islam of the past decades has proved itself incapable of providing a workable future. "Islam, he writes, "like any other religion, is a way of life, one that is given its shape and form by Muslim men and women. . . .Today, as Muslim societies emerge from the Islamist era, it is through openness to the world and to democracy that they will construct their future. There is no longer any real alternative." Kepel's projection of democracy in the Arab world may be wishful; yet the task facing Western governments is—as for years it has properly been, if regularly forgotten—firm resistance to extremism, the promotion of sustainable, responsive, and pacific governance in ongoing dialogue with cultures and civilizations around the world; and a renewal of our own commitment to liberal democracy. The horrors that flash on the news as I write this review underscore just how urgent a task that is. ●

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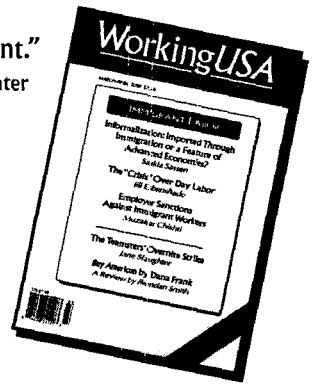

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Morality as Style

Benjamin Kunkel

KOBA THE DREAD:
LAUGHTER AND THE TWENTY MILLION
by Martin Amis
Talk Miramax, 2002 306 pp $24.95

ALL NOVELISTS are stylists, but only a few are known chiefly for having what Vladimir Nabokov called "a fancy prose style." Over the past twenty years, no well-known British writer has seemed more a stylist than Martin Amis. Amis is fancy in the hip, urban way of mixing a thrift-store find with a designer piece; his prose is notable for its slanginess as well as its lexical hauteur. Addressing the ghost of his father in his curious new book about Stalin, he writes: "I suppose . . . that there is one chance in a googolplex that [your daughter, also dead] is now at your side." We hear the echo of the colloquial "one in a million," and the dictionary will tell you that a googolplex is the number 1 followed by a thousand zeros. It is all too easy to understand why in writing about Stalin Amis should associate death with impossibly large numbers. But for now the point is only that Amis developed early on a distinctive idiom—showy, jokey, repetitive, fierce, sentimental—and has stuck with it ever since. You may not always recall what his characters were and did; you can always remember the language in which they were dressed.

Yet Amis isn't only a stylist; he is also a moralist. And to him these are one and the same. As he says in his memoir, *Experience*, "Style *is* morality: morality detailed, configured, intensified." We can see, then, why it might have especially appealed to him to begin *Koba the Dread* (Koba was Stalin's nickname) with a quote from Robert Conquest's book on Soviet forced collectivization and the resulting famine: "in the actions here recorded about twenty human lives were lost for, not every word, but every letter, in this book." Amis goes on to comment: "The book is 411 pages long." Such a book fulfills, in the blackest possible way, the novelist's dream—of a language almost unbearably thick with human significance. Who could ignore a book in which, as Amis writes, "guileless prepositions like *at* and *to* represent the murder of six or seven large families"?

The sorry answer, of course, is that it was possible among several generations of Western intellectuals to ignore or minimize just what book of revelation Stalin's regime was spelling out. The novelist Kingsley Amis, for one, though he wound up viciously and cartoonishly on the right, was a loyal member of the British Communist Party from 1941 to 1956. In *Koba the Dread*, his son Martin follows up an outraged résumé of Stalin's crimes with an open letter chiding Kingsley's ghost for this utopian indulgence and another to Christopher Hitchens, calling him to account for failure to see, as an erstwhile Trotskyist, not the monstrosity of Stalinism, but its preparation at the hands of Lenin and Trotsky. Yet Amis's tone of personal grievance, his affrontedness and anger, seem directed less at his father and his friend Hitchens, or even at eager dupes on the Old or New Left, than at Stalin himself—that "passionate lowbrow," Lenin's "underbred mascot," who detested "anyone higher or better: a numerous company."

Koba the Dread has not been generously received, and you can see why. These days, a denunciation of Stalin seems almost apolitical, like coming out against cancer. Moreover, the book contains no original research (the historian Orlando Figes has even shown that Amis gets a few facts wrong); it forgets the embattled decency of left oppositionists; it treats differing analyses as loose "talk" rather than argu-

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ments; and it collapses into bathos when—many reviewers seized on this—Amis likens the cries of his infant daughter to those that must have been heard in "the deepest cellars of the Butrkyi Prison in Moscow during the Great Terror." It might also be added that its anti-utopianism is taunting and crude. After his right turn, Kingsley Amis could still concede that "The ideal of . . . the Just City, is one that cannot be discarded without lifelong feelings of disappointment and loss." To Martin this sentence "has no meaning—indeed, no content." (That would make it the opposite of Conquest's language.) "Just what *is* this Just City? What would it look like? What would its citizens be saying and doing all day?" Such words and deeds are indeed difficult to predict, since a just city would also be a free one. But if it is a totalitarian paradox to prescribe in advance the uses of freedom, it should not be beyond us, or Amis, to conceive of conditions of greater liberty than most workers and citizens enjoy, or to realize that speech and action become more circumscribed as jobs become more repetitive and exhausting, political choices fewer, and forms of culture more homogeneous.

Still, Martin Amis has produced a useful book. It offers such a quick, pained, and vivid account of Stalin's psychopathic career that Amis and his intelligently marshaled sources can't help but induce that pity and disgust that segments of the Western left for many years failed to feel. (For myself, I was made freshly ashamed of certain casual ideas about the Soviet Union I'd had as an undergraduate, and glad to have left no record of them.) The astronomical quantum of suffering endured by Stalin's victims "will not"—as Pasternak said, and Amis quotes—"fit within the bounds of consciousness," but the mind's best approximation has got to be in shuttling back and forth between the anecdote and the statistic, and this Amis does with a skill made brisk by anger. Besides, in many instances Amis's language is furiously apt, as when he refers to the "ideological debauchery" of Stalin's remark that "together with the Germans we would have been invincible," or when he notes the killing irony "that a ruling order predicated on human perfectibility should reward, glorify, encourage and indeed necessitate all that is humanly base."

There is something funny about people who exactly misdescribe themselves, and this is part of the answer to the question burdening Amis: how, knowing the nature of Stalin's rule and the approximate number of his victims, can we ever laugh at communism? Yet it *is* comic, bleakly but genuinely, that Stalin reacted as he did when a Soviet census gave a smaller figure than he'd wanted: where, wondered their murderer, could all these missing people be? Stalin had the census-takers killed.

Koba the Dread's grievance against Stalin is so manifestly personal and—with no large company of Stalin-fanciers out there— so politically negligible, that one goes looking to Amis's other work for its source. His novels from *The Rachel Papers* to *The Information* are, above all, comedies—playful, riffing, splashed with one-liners—and they inspire the thought that the laughter troubling Amis these days is his own, heard as an echo. In the letter to Hitchens he borrows Hamlet's words: "I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth." What was this mirth like when he had it? Suppose we want to know what morality it entailed: what, then, was its style?

In Amis's book of criticism, *The War Against Cliché*, the most decorated writers are Nabokov and Saul Bellow, and Amis evidently would like to be considered the successor of both. Yet Amis lacks their sharp eyes, and is visually acute mostly when his senses have been quickened by disgust. He sees more clearly than anything else such things as a cabbie's neck, "pocked and mottled, with a flicker of adolescent virulence in the crimson underhang of the ears," and Indian dogs with their air of being "abruptly promoted rats, bemused by their sudden elevation."

But Amis's prose is rhetorical rather than imagistic, and likes to proceed by incremental variation on repeated words or notions. Its characteristic and paradoxical moods are of a workmanlike gaiety, an energetic weariness, a relished disdain. Here is unprepossessing Terry, from an early novel, *Success* (1978), lamenting his reversals of sexual fortune, especially as these compare with the triumphs of his toothsome brother: "Ah but from that

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highpoint, let me tell you, from that proud peak, things definitely took a turn for the worse, things ceased to gel in the way they had been doing, things started to go wrong." Nine years later, in *Einstein's Monsters*, a collection of parables and black fantasies on the theme of nuclear war (another case of death allied with astronomical figures), we have: "The world gets older. . . . The world has been to too many parties, been in so many fights, lost its keys, had its handbag stolen, drunk too much. It all adds up. A tab is presented. Our ironic destiny. Look at the modern infamies, the twentieth century sins."

These are first-person narrators talking, but Amis writes like this in all his voices. His style, which can seem founded on the principle that some things bear repeating, is a natural vehicle for his preoccupations, which are often with what everyone knows and no one can accept. *The Information* (1995) concerns a middle-aged failure of novelist continually aghast at his age and unsuccess: recalling the axiom that at a certain age a man has the face he deserves, Richard Tull looks into the mirror and thinks that "*no one* deserved the face he had. There was nothing on the planet it was that bad to do." He knows what his life has been and still asks himself: "What happened?" *Time's Arrow* (1991) tells a different story on a very different scale, but is likewise a darkly comic protest against established results. The novel plays on rewind, as it were, the life-story of a Nazi doctor—a brilliant conceit, because the reversal of time also makes for an inversion of moral value: only in this backward world do Nazi doctors heal their patients and uphold the Hippocratic oath.

It seems indecent but also unavoidable that someone consulting the bathroom mirror and someone contemplating the Holocaust should suffer versions of the same wish: to push the rewind button. And while it may sound snide to say that Amis's big "modern infamies" and the world's unequal distribution of physical attractiveness and other marks of prestige compete, thematically, for top billing in his work, I don't mean it in quite that way. The firms taking out advertising space in the A-section of the *New York Times* clearly understand that it isn't any trick to move from sighing over the global woe to wondering if you could use a face-lift or a new shirt. Martin Amis's novels are peopled mainly by educated liberal urbanites, among whom (and I am no dissenter here) it might be hard to find more consensus than on how terrible mass murder is, and how nice it must be to look nice. What you do in the morning is look in the mirror, then look in the paper.

The great passions of Amis's characters, especially in *Money* and *The Information*, are for getting laid, getting drunk, and getting ahead, and he is never a better writer than when following these worthy if often undignified campaigns. But it seems that to Amis the action of his novels is tainted by a fatal triviality. For years he's sought to give his work moral weight by worrying explicitly about nuclear war, or remembering the Holocaust, or now by enumerating Stalin's victims. Yet although we know that the world in which people die too quickly to count and the world in which we ourselves get and spend are in fact the same world, this is difficult to feel. It's like putting one hand under hot water and the other under cold; you won't be able to experience both temperatures at once. And the inability to bring the extremes of modern life into a relationship is part of what accounts, I think, for the impression throughout Amis's work of a frivolity at odds with itself.

AMIS IS ONE of those who like to define the twentieth century in terms of enormous body counts. This has a way of implying that life where it is tolerable is somehow marginal, thin, unrepresentative. Consideration of murder by the million alters the look of life; we stare through civilization to its potential breakdown and through human variety to a common extinction. Life and its meanings fearfully contract into mere survival.

It's telling that Amis's last two novels have been haunted by the night sky as a vista of randomness and oblivion. *The Information* abounds with observations such as this: "It seems that the universe is thirty billion years across and every inch of it would kill us if we went there. This is the position of the universe with regard to human life." And in *Night Train* (1997), a female police officer investigates the

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suicide of a beautiful, wealthy, brilliant astronomer, discovering that "On the evening Jennifer Rockwell died, the sky was clear and visibility excellent." It may sound like sleuthing of my own, but I suspect mass murder and the night sky preside very similarly over Martin Amis's fiction; they are black voids understood, if at all, by means of fantastically large sums, and they imply that the jurisdiction of moral law is very local indeed.

Here again, this time from *Koba the Dread*, is Amis's credo: "When I read someone's prose I reckon to get a sense of their moral life." There is not much trouble in ascertaining Martin Amis's judgments, or our own, when it comes to Hitler and Stalin. The worst of modern events are hard to look at—but they are also easy. We know with as settled a knowledge as politics affords that the Great Terror and the Holocaust and Cambodia's Year Zero and Rwanda's Hutu Power genocide were abominations. And if morality and politics by their nature involve vexing, imperfect, and necessary choices, then the thought of "the twentieth century sins" hardly engages our morality or politics at all. Heaping curses on a long-dead and all but universally reviled dictator is not a credible summons to intellectual conscience.

In *The Information* Amis jokes that "in the street outside, the old divisions of class and then race were giving way to new divisions: good shoes versus bad shoes, good eyes versus bad eyes (eyes that were clear, at one extreme, ranged against eyes that were far fierier than any Tabasco)." This is kind of funny and kind of true, and anyway excites more interest and uncertainty than what we would get if confronted with goose-stepping boots. The streets of New York and London have accommodated perfectly those rivalries of success and failure, of snobs and yobs, of attractiveness and still more keenly registered ugliness that animate Amis's fiction. But it seems to have escaped him that these streets could equally have sponsored just the serious moral dilemmas he has obviously craved for a subject. Great Britain may be little more than an accessory where American power and culture are concerned, but Martin Amis nevertheless belongs to the upper reaches of an intensely stratified Anglophone civilization that is as abundant with moral problems as it with so much else. If these don't strike us as starkly as those posed by the powers defeated in the Second World War and the cold war, they do possess the advantage for the novelist of being intimate—which is not to say they aren't also vast. It isn't a necessary or sufficient condition of good fiction that it deal with moral problems at once private and public, but to write such novels is a high calling, and one Amis seems to have heard.

He gets closer to fulfilling his ambition when he writes about suicide than when he writes about historically distant mass murder; it's then that he almost asks what sort of life is worth living. But just as soon as the question is posed, it is mooted by Amis's perspectives on the cosmic and the mundane. If the size of the universe and the endlessness of death mock our daily cares, it's hard to see how they permit the crimes of Stalin or Hitler to remain a big deal either. Meanwhile, Amis writes about his Londoners and New Yorkers in tones his father once identified with journalism—those of a "non-committal superiority," a "pervasive unspecific irony." His characters are morally undifferentiated, all appetite and status anxiety, and when a condition like this looks inescapable, it can't be meaningfully judged. Boasting many colorful surfaces, Amis's books lack a moral texture.

And yet style, as postulated, does suggest morality. Amis's language is proud and ostentatious; his most eloquent attitude is a vicious superbity. His remarks on love and friendship are commonplaces of sentimentality, provoking no more reflection than his evaluation of evil. His *explanation* of evil, however, is something else, and a counterpart to his style; he tends to ascribe it to envious inferiority. The serial killer Frederick West was a "sordid inadequate" just as Stalin was "underbred" and a "lowbrow." No doubt envy inspires much crime, and much of the worst. But the envious and the arrogant are mostly in agreement on what constitutes value, and the morality they share is an ugly one, whatever the beauty on one side. Martin Amis found his undeniably smart and sparkling style when he was very young, and has since refined without really revising it. This

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fancy prose remains reminiscent of something Robert Musil said about another young writer's idea of his own work: "[H]e was more dazzled by its brilliance than able to see what was going on in light of it." But not only youthful ambition and certain kinds of moral pride show a greater desire to shine than to see by the light one gives off. So do good shoes, and many other things radiant throughout any unjust city with fame, glamour, and success. ●

BENJAMIN KUNKEL writes fiction and criticism.

The Left and Democracy

The Triumph of Realo-politik

Sheri Berman

FORGING DEMOCRACY: THE HISTORY OF THE LEFT IN EUROPE, 1850-2000
by Geoff Eley
Oxford University Press, 2002 720 pp $35

"DEMOCRACY," Eduard Bernstein once said, "is both a means and end. It is a weapon in the struggle for socialism, and it is the form in which socialism will be realized." Although not quoted, this argument lies at the heart of Geoff Eley's massive new book *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*.

The main goal of Eley's book is to remind us of the centrality of the left in the struggle for democracy. He takes aim in particular at two views that continue to characterize much popular rhetoric and thinking about democratization: that liberalism and the bourgeoisie have historically been the "carriers" of democracy, and that it has generally emerged naturally alongside modern capitalism. In contrast, Eley argues that for the last 150 years or so it has been not the liberal middle classes but the socialist movement that has "most consistently . . . held up the banner of democracy." And in Europe, he notes, "democracy did not result from natural evolution or economic prosperity. It certainly did not emerge as an inevitable by-product of individualism or the market. It developed because masses of people organized collectively to demand it."

The book's narrative covers three broad periods—the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the interwar years, and the postwar era—and describes a common pattern playing out in each, with mainstream left parties taking two steps forward in the political arena but falling one step back thanks to their timidity and neglect of social issues. The left's push for democracy really began in the 1860s, Eley notes, when a system of liberalized nation-states "solidified" and the "legal and constitutional conditions . . . for popular democratic parties" were created. During this era the socialist movement turned its attention away from utopian communities, producer cooperatives, and the like and toward the national political arena, organizing the world's first modern, highly institutionalized political parties. These parties, in turn, enabled socialists to transform the economically and socially disadvantaged working classes into a potent political force. Eley documents how these parties struggled to force *ancien régimes* to accept full democratization—and "struggle" is indeed the right word, because in no European country was full democracy achieved without a fight. It took strikes, protests, and, most of all, persistent political organizing to get recalcitrant elites to recognize worker demands.

The battle, moreover, was not just against conservatives, Junkers, and other easy-to-demonize political reactionaries, but often against liberals and the middle classes as well. The latter may have been eager to establish the rule of law and curb the power of monarchs and illiberal elites, but they were also fearful of the

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masses and wanted to protect the prerogatives that they enjoyed under the existing systems. As Eley notes, "liberals consistently disparaged the civic capacities of the masses, reaching a crescendo of fear during the 1848 revolutions and the first pan-European surge of popular enfranchisement during 1867-71. In liberal discourse, 'the democracy' was synonymous with rule of the mob." Indeed, the struggle over democratization ended up dividing many liberal movements and alienating many of their erstwhile working-class supporters, thereby contributing to liberalism's declining fortunes in the decades before the First World War.

Eley argues that the mainstream left's focus during these years on national parliaments and democratization, however, led it to ignore or downplay issues that fell outside a traditional "class-political framework," such as those relating to gender, sexuality, family life, nationalism, and race. By slighting these social issues, he claims, socialists forced those concerned with them to form their own movements—movements that, in turn, pushed the boundaries of democracy forward.

The same process occurred after 1918, Eley contends, but this time with tragic results. As a wave of democratization swept Europe, socialists found themselves in previously unimaginable positions of power. This was particularly true in Germany, a case that Eley discusses at length. There, in addition to propelling the socialists into power, the end of the war also led to the rise of a new type of leftist organization, the councils—essentially spontaneous local associations of workers and others, generally lacking both a coherent vision of the future and any real institutional infrastructure. Rather than embrace this new, unorthodox movement, mainstream socialists chose to ignore or suppress it, following what Eley refers to as a politics of "intransigent moderation." Throughout the revolutionary period of 1917-1919, he writes, the German Social Democratic Party remained focused on calling a constituent assembly and "made no mention of socialism . . . or the [councils]. The SPD leaders were thinking less of socialist construction than of the orderly transition to a parliamentary republic."

Eley argues that here, as during the prewar period, by sticking to a traditional view of politics mainstream socialists lost an "unprecedented chance to expand the frontiers of democracy." By "holding the revolution to a narrowly constitutionalist path . . . [and] restraining and then repressing the popular movement," he writes, the SPD lost the opportunity to use the councils to institute a "'third way' between [traditional] constitutionalism and the insurrectionary politics inspired by the Bolshevik revolution." These choices, in his view, contributed greatly to a dampening of the "popular enthusiasm for democracy" during the interwar period, and as the "limited resilience of the Weimar Republic . . . confirmed, the costs were huge."

Eley sees the same dynamic continuing after 1945. He stresses the critical role played by mainstream left parties in solidifying the hold of democracy on European societies after the Second World War and emphasizes the significance of their efforts to complement political with social rights—to employment, unemployment and health insurance, pensions, housing, education, and so forth. The left, he demonstrates, was critical to the crafting of a postwar settlement that "transitioned from the liberal democratic ideals of 1789, which saw political rights as sufficient guarantees of freedom, toward social democracy and rights in the socioeconomic sphere." Once again, however, he criticizes the mainstream left, this time for focusing too exclusively on the institutionalization of democracy and the expansion of the welfare state while neglecting other issues—and once again he argues that the result of this neglect was the proliferation of new social and extraparliamentary movements, this time led by "feminists, gay liberationists, environmentalists, autonomists, and others." He claims this threw into question "socialist parties' claims to be the vanguard of democracy" and praises the new movements for extending the "boundaries of politics."

Forging Democracy is an important and valuable work, one that provides insight into the major achievement of modern political life and the left's role in driving it forward. Its thorough research and comprehensive scope should prove invaluable for anyone seri-

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ously interested in the subject. For all the book's virtues, however, one wonders whether the author's sympathy for nontraditional radical groups may have colored some of his interpretations. In the language of the German Greens, a party that evinces many of the trends he is enthusiastic about, Eley comes across as something of a "fundi" who constantly laments the endless compromises made by the "realos." His mainstream leaders are always ignoring their radical consciences, abandoning the movement's goals, and making deals with the devil. What this approach overlooks, however, is the essential realo insights—no less true for being clichés—that politics is the art of the possible and the best can be the enemy of the good.

Eley's curious treatment of Eduard Bernstein and his fellow "revisionists" is a case in point. As noted above, he does not mention the Bernstein quote with which this review begins, nor does he focus much on Bernstein himself. Yet it was indisputably the moderates like Bernstein, and not their radical or orthodox Marxist opponents, who were the true champions of democracy on the left in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It may be true, as Eley stresses, that socialist parties in general were the main champions of political liberalization and democratization during this era. But there were important splits within the socialist movement over the meaning and value of democracy, and it was primarily Bernstein and those like him who believed that democracy was so important that they were willing to sacrifice other goals to it, and make difficult compromises in order to achieve it. For orthodox Marxists and other radicals, in contrast, democracy was at best a means to an end—important to fight for because it would provide the best context for the struggle for socialism, but itself part and parcel of the bourgeois world that needed transcending.

This was no mere intellectual or theoretical conflict, moreover. Some of the most difficult and divisive issues facing prewar socialists—whether or not to form strategic alliances with the bourgeoisie and with liberal parties, whether or not to accept positions in a nonsocialist government—really boiled down to a question of how socialists interpreted and valued democracy. The ability of orthodox Marxists and other radicals to prevail over Bernstein and other revisionists meant that although socialist parties did indeed fight strenuously for democracy in the years before 1914, many decisions that might have helped them speed up the process of political change were not taken.

ELEY'S CHASTISEMENT of interwar socialist parties for their "limited" vision of democracy and refusal to embrace the councils and other, more radical demands for change is open to similar challenge. Eley focuses largely on the SPD's failure to "harness the new popular energies the councils movement released," but the party's real mistake was that it did not (as he himself notes) work more strenuously to dismantle "the bases of authoritarianism." With power thrust into its hands after 1918, the party failed to act decisively and strategically, and allowed too much of the *ancien régime* to retain its hold over key institutions of German political life. This, in turn, was at least partially a consequence of the relative lack of attention the SPD had devoted to thinking about the role it wanted and needed to play in Germany's democratization in the years before the war—a state of affairs that was itself largely a function of the instrumental view of democracy held by the orthodox Marxists that dominated party debate during this era. As a result, when the SPD found itself at the head of a democratic government at the end of the war, it was unsure of its role, uncertain of precisely what it wanted to achieve, and therefore ended up following, rather than leading events during an extremely chaotic and fluid time.

As for the councils, they are probably best understood as a consequence of the political vacuum that accompanied the collapse of the old order and as a reflection of a widespread, generalized, but somewhat amorphous longing for change; to see them as the potential core of a revitalized left seems romantic at best. They contained a myriad of different and potentially conflicting interests and groups, and could never have formed the basis of any political alternative of real consequence or staying power. Indeed, in another case Eley discusses, that of Italy, councils were more di-

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rectly embraced by a radicalized socialist movement, and yet the outcome for democracy was not much better.

Eley's analysis of the postwar period can be questioned as well. He is certainly right to argue that the mainstream left could and should have moved more quickly to incorporate the demands of peace activists, environmentalists, feminists, and others. But is his praise of the extraparliamentary movements that grew up around these demands during the 1960s and 1970s really deserved, especially in a book devoted to the struggle for democracy? Many of these movements, after all, rejected what they dismissively considered "bourgeois, capitalist" democracy and praised the likes of Ho Chi Minh, Mao Zedong, and Fidel Castro—hardly icons of freedom. Similarly, stung by the relative lack of popular support they received, some participants in these movements developed scorn for workers and public opinion more generally, revealing a distaste for the "masses" and the "mob" oddly reminiscent of that of liberals and conservatives a century earlier. And finally, it is worth remembering that no matter how valid the desire for progressive change, these extraparliamentary movements were for the most part amorphous, localized, and fragmented. Although vehement in their rejection of the contemporary order, they had little concrete to offer in return. As François Mitterrand once said of the leaders of the May 1968 student movement, when they "wanted to explain the motivations behind their demonstrations . . . what a mish-mash of quasi-Marxism, what hotch-potch, what confusion."

Here the story of the German Greens is instructive. They have proved the most durable and influential of the nontraditional groups Eley lionizes, but only by deciding to join and conform to the system they had earlier so vociferously criticized. Indeed, the Greens eventually learned precisely the lessons that mainstream socialists learned a century earlier, namely that peaceful political change meant accepting democracy, with all the compromises and disappointments it entails. Joschka Fischer is the most popular politician and most important figure on the left in Germany today not because he embodies some anarchic radical spirit of the 1960s, but rather because he has figured out how to pursue a viable progressive agenda from inside the system.

None of this is to deny that there have been times in the past when mainstream left parties working toward incremental rather than revolutionary change temporized, stumbled, or failed to advance their agendas. One cannot, however, read Eley's book without heightened respect, not so much for the left's radical visionaries and *luftmenschen*, but rather for the unsung activists and foot soldiers who struggled relentlessly to secure a string of minor victories that eventually yielded the democratic political systems we take for granted today. *Forging Democracy* is a valuable reminder not only of the heroic struggle it took to bring about political freedom in Europe, but also of how crucial was the role of the left—of workers, the poor, and the underprivileged more generally—in its achievement. Ironically, it was the part of the left that we now think of as least heroic, radical, and glamorous that deserves the lion's share of the credit. ●

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Anti–Anti-Americanism

Todd Gitlin

PERPETUAL WAR FOR PERPETUAL PEACE: HOW WE GOT TO BE SO HATED
by Gore Vidal
Thunder's Mouth/Nation Books, 2002
160 pp $16.50

WHY DO PEOPLE HATE AMERICA?
by Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies
Icon Books, 2002 231 pp $19.99

"WHAT WE THINK OF AMERICA"
Granta Issue 77
Spring 2002 256 pp $20.95

"DISSENT FROM THE HOMELAND: ESSAYS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11"
The South Atlantic Quarterly Spring 2002
200 pp $12

ANTI-AMERICANISM is an emotion masquerading as an analysis, a morality, an ideal, even an idea about what to do. When hatred of foreign policies ignites into hatred of an entire people and their civilization, then thinking is dead and demonology lives. When complexity of thought devolves into caricature, intellect is close to reconciling itself to mass murder.

One might have thought all this obvious. On the evidence of two of the works under review, it is not. Consider the sad case of Gore Vidal, once "a great wit" (in the words of Norman Mailer, who proceeded to skewer him), now a witless crank. Reposing in Ravello, Italy, Vidal maunders from snippet to snippet. His latest volume of musings manages to be skimpy and redundant at once. Collecting one's *Vanity Fair* pieces as if they would stand up in book covers is an act of, well, vanity. That such an exercise should be escorted into the world by the *Nation*'s book publishing arm speaks unflatteringly about publishing standards on the left.

Toward the likes of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh and al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who would define their atrocities as retaliations against the United States of America and its incidental citizens, Vidal burns with sympathy. Not for him so banal an act as moral condemnation or investigation of what sort of person commits mass murder out of political grievance. Rather, Vidal thinks it is tough-minded to indulge his desire to know "the various preoccupations on our side that drove them to such terrible acts." Note: "drove them." These killers were presumably helpless. All one needs to know about them is "the unremitting violence of the United States against the rest of the world." Curiosity succumbs to the caricaturist's crippled imagination. In a follow-up article published in Britain's *Observer* (October 27, 2002), Vidal takes up the torch for selective agnosticism with this remark: "We still don't know by whom we were struck that infamous Tuesday, or for what true purpose."

Not that Vidal is incapable of generosity. At least one American benefits from it: McVeigh, who in a 1999 letter to Vidal complimented him on being the first "to really explore the underlying motivations for such a strike against the U.S. Government [as the Oklahoma City bombing]." Presumably, it takes one perceptive guy to recognize the genius of another: "McVeigh considered himself, rightly or wrongly, at war." Well, which is it? Vidal does not pause to worry the point. When McVeigh writes that "there is no . . . proof that knowledge of the presence of children existed in relation to the Oklahoma City bombing" (love that tortured syntax), Vidal claims that McVeigh "denies any foreknowledge of the presence of children in the Murrah building."

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In other words, Vidal has a good word for anyone who likes the sound of "a final all-out war against the 'System,'" or "deliberately risks—and gives—his life to alert his fellow citizens to an onerous government." In the end, McVeigh and bin Laden are pikers. "Most of today's actual terrorists can be found within our own governments, federal, state, municipal." "Municipal" is a particularly nice touch: perhaps Vidal means police departments, though for all the care he takes he might just as well be alluding to death squads at work under cover of sanitation departments. If you wonder what might be a better society, Vidal helpfully offers up what he calls "Tim's Bill of Rights," which includes (a) no taxes, (b) metal-based currency, and (c) low legislative salaries. So much for political theory.

Instead of ideas about what makes America tick, Vidal dabbles in conspiracy theory. If McVeigh did not act alone—and there is some interesting reportorial speculation to this effect—then, in Vidal's cockeyed vision, McVeigh gets off the hook. He offers the notion that if McVeigh had been more thoroughly investigated, the September 11 plot might have been scotched. He blasts the *New York Times* for ignoring the parallel between the demolition of the Federal Building and the Reichstag fire.

To Vidal and his fellow paranoids, everything makes sense. Sources such as a newsletter called *Strategic Investment* and the inventor of the neutron bomb are drummed up to convince the reader. Vidal's long crank letter to FBI director-designate Robert Mueller is included not to make an argument—something it fails to do—but to demonstrate his superior knowledge. Vidal seems to think that to make a case he need do no more than append any item to which he has put his hand. His laundry lists would be as useful.

Unsurprisingly, Vidal's America is all of a piece, what sixties' crackpots used to call Amerika. It is "a country evenly divided between political reactionaries and religious maniacs. . . .For Americans, morality has nothing at all to do with ethics or right action. . . . Morality is SEX, SEX, SEX."

This is reasoning in the fashion of McVeigh and bin Laden. And it is close to the prosecutorial logic of the British writers Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies. The Pakistani-born Sardar is an information scientist, Davies is an anthropologist and former BBC producer. At the outset, they alert their readers that "This is . . . not a book about the positive sides of the United States." *Why Do People Hate America?* is a book of talking points for what the authors consider the global majority, for "loathing for America is about as close as we can get to a universal sentiment." To them, America "forms an immensely coherent whole." And they have no trouble deciding that they don't like it.

THOUGH THEIR documentation is spotty, the strong point of their argument with America concerns corporate and Washington economic policies that magnify poverty elsewhere and despoil the environment. But for them, capitalism is not an economic system: it is a national brand. That America might have allies in this despoliation—Japanese corporations, European corporations, Brazilian corporations, Canadian corporations—does not seem to cross their minds. No Japanese video games hook the world's urban youth. Does Mecca have multilane motorways? *Cherchez les Américains*!

Indeed, in their accounting, American culture is like the AIDS virus: infectious, self-transforming, and lethal. It doesn't interest them that, loathsome and silly as much of Hollywood and U.S. pop product is, people everywhere mix the stuff into hybrids. They play, hum, watch, and read it because, in strange fashion, it serves not only aggressiveness but (perverted as they frequently are) ideals of freedom from the antimodern traditions that Sardar and Davies lionize but many others wish to transform or escape.

For them, a few idle asides excepted, America and its works amount to nothing but unbridled wickedness, a brief for gunplay, willful stupidity, and closed-mindedness. "Within the U.S. it often seems that the hardest topic to debate is the idea of America itself and its problems. . . . It is the prime reason for infuriation, antipathy, hostility and even hatred beyond the bounds of America." As if those who would slaughter Americans would sweeten up and address their troubles if we had better de-

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bates. As if America-hating began when Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, or when George W. Bush's clique took power in the 2000 coup d'état. As if the hatred did not have a history in Europe's and Asia's fascist and imperialist pasts.

Until late in their game, Sardar and Davies have no qualms about demonizing the American Empire. Toward this end, they trundle out a potted history of American Manifest Destiny and racism, as if the struggle against racism were not also American. In the end, their answer to the question their title poses is: Because America is Hateful.

"What most people hate," they acknowledge, is not most Americans but "'America,' the political entity based on authoritarian violence, double standards, self-obsessed self-interest, and an ahistorical naivety that equates the Self with the World." That this "political entity" belatedly defended Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo is of no interest to them. Then, after deploying a chain of half-truths for 204 pages, the authors go pious, preaching that "hatred always simplifies." Suddenly, on page 209, "the United States is a very complex country." Oh. Too bad we're two pages from their last word. It's the shabbiest of Hollywood endings, a little grace-note to close out a rant.

In *Granta*'s special spring issue, "What We Think of America," the same Ziauddin Sardar contributes a fine, observant, funny, first-person essay on Mecca, where he lived and conducted research for five years. In the co-authored shadow of a book under review, however, his delicate skepticism toward tradition is not in evidence. By contrast, most of the twenty-four contributors to the *Granta* symposium draw on experience and display curiosity about the actually existing America, where people live. The Canadian Michael Ignatieff praises America's gift for "democratic reinvention"—badly needed now, I might add. The Indian Ramachandra Guha recalls that the sight of the dean of the Yale Law School carrying his own baggage "was a body blow to my anti-Americanism." The Chilean Ariel Dorfman indispensably warns "how comfortable it is to employ anti-Americanism as a way of avoiding the faults and deficiencies of our own societies, even though such self-criticism should not prevent us from assigning blame to Americans when that blame is due, which it often is." Meanwhile, England's Harold Pinter contributes the sort of judgment that one of his stumbling, punch-drunk characters might make, to the effect that the United States is murderous, period, so there. Almost all the other contributors, writers from many countries, display some or much grace as they try to navigate through America's contradictions. Their political positions are less significant than their attentiveness. Blessedly, they look the abstractions up and down—and dance away from them.

However, speaking of (and in) abstractions, most of the contributors to *South Atlantic Quarterly*'s "Dissent from the Homeland" issue are happy to dwell in a realm where almost any proposition can be rendered acceptable. This special issue oscillates between the approaches of the two editors: the pacifism of the Protestant theologian Stanley Hauerwas and the leftist literary theory of Frank Lettricchia, both of Duke University. In most of the left-wing essays, we leave any recognizable world of life and death and plunge into a world of nothing but language. The dominant tone is sounded by practitioners of literary theory, for whom nothing is real, nothing to get hung about—except American militarism, American capitalism, America. Al-Qaeda is not much of an enemy, but bad interpretation is. Deadpan, the editors offer a translation of Jean Baudrillard's notorious *Le Monde* piece on the spirit of terrorism, with its claims that the American "superpower . . . through its unbearable power is the secret cause of all the violence percolating all over the world, and consequently of the terrorist imagination . . ."; that "We could even go so far as to say it is *they* who perpetrated the attack, but it was *we* who wished it"; and in a stunning crescendo, possibly the craziest sentence yet written about these awful events: "When the two towers collapsed, one had the impression that they were responding to the suicide of the suicide-jets with their own suicide." "Even go so far. . ." Those are the operative words, and not just for Baudrillard, from

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whom one expects this sort of thing.

We find in these pages Fredric Jameson's declaration that Osama bin Laden is "the very prototype of the accumulation of money in the hands of private individuals"; Susan Willis's declaration that "the great majority of the victims died in the service of global finance capital"; and the surmise of John Milbank, Frances Meyers Ball Professor of Philosophical Theology at the University of Virginia, that September 11 "may even have been a preemptive strike by some Islamic forces," along with his Chomskyan claim that to understand the American reaction, "one must . . . ignore the pieties about the dreadfulness of terrorism," since "the West and Israel itself engage in or covertly support many acts of terror all over the globe . . . " (Milbank also puts scare quotes around "rights," as in "individual 'rights.'" In this fastidiousness, he should find common cause with the Bush administration.) Amid predictable shots at Bush and theme park culture, few of the authors display any curiosity about the mass-murder squads that targeted the United States. This is *Hamlet* without the usurper king of Denmark—or rather, starring George Bush II as Claudius. Even the sober pacifist appeal by Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, puts language at the center. For thirty years, the conservators of literary theory have imagined that they are not only decoding culture but illuminating all of social reality. In the social sciences, the "linguistic turn" emptied out life into a language game in which any proposition sounds about as sensible as any other. In this collection, it's theory that, like Baudrillard's imaginary towers, implodes.

For his part, co-editor Hauerwas finds that "the world was not changed on September 11, 2001. The world was changed during the celebration of Passover in A. D. 33." Straightforwardly rejecting patriotism, Hauerwas embraces not only pacifism but a fatalism without political hope. It should be noted that this special issue includes a few pieces of some discernment, including an essay about a military base by the anthropologist Catherine Lutz, who is actually interested in the density of class relations in the world where Americans live. The most striking item, however, comes from a Muslim professor, Vincent J. Cornell, director of the King Fahd Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Arkansas, who takes Islam seriously enough to criticize proponents who would use anti-Americanism as an alibi for their own incapacities.

THIS IS NO easy time for anti–anti-Americans, for the Washington usurpers in power actively dare the world to hate the country they bestride. The small-minded Bush cadres are so benightedly self-interested, so contemptuous of world (and American) opinion, so reckless in rhetoric, so heedless of argument, that they will for the next two years pose an immense challenge to people of good will everywhere—to resist their overweening designs without succumbing to barbarism. This is the high-wire act we are called to perform. The auspicious news is that a goodly proportion of Americans—on many issues, a majority—are straining to leave them behind. Quite literally, on issue after issue, the regime in charge does not represent America. This is good news, but it is not necessarily operational news. It entails a sizable moral and intellectual challenge alongside a political one—to sustain complexity of thought about the America these plutocrats command, to stand in their way without bitterness, to refuse to give up on the higher American possibility. Intellectuals must not permit sloppy thinking to cede the usurpers an American future they have not earned, and that, with luck, they will not inherit. ●

TODD GITLIN's most recent book is *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives*. His next is *Letters to a Young Activist*, to be published this spring by Basic Books. He is a professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University. A shorter version of this piece appeared in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

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JAMES CHAPIN, 1941-2002

THE NAME James Chapin may not be familiar to many *Dissent* readers. He didn't write a great deal for the magazine. Until the last year or so of his life—when he turned out superb political analysis for an unlikely outlet, United Press International—he didn't publish much anywhere. No matter. For the many who knew him at *Dissent*—and at every level of political life in Washington and New York—James was one of the most brilliant and provocative thinkers we have ever met. And he was also one of the kindest and most decent of men.

Most people knew him as "Jim." Since I was lucky to have known him all my life, he was and will forever be "James." Jim Chapin is his father, a well-known drummer, who from time to time concertizes with James's brothers, Tom and Steve, performing songs written by the best known Chapin of all, the late Harry Chapin. James, the eldest boy, was always James, and he was different. For one thing, he was deaf in one ear, something that he would joke about: the son of a great American musical family who couldn't quite hear right! They were all lanky; he was stout. And he was the family reader, scholar, and historian. Amid an extraordinary clan of writers and musicians, it was as if one person had been blessed with a clan's worth of brains in thinking about politics, government, and history.

I grew up across a stone wall from his family in Brooklyn Heights; and my siblings and I would spend at least a couple of weeks each summer at their place in northern New Jersey. James's grandfather, the great literary critic Kenneth Burke, had moved there in the 1920s; and each of K.B.'s three daughters and their families had a house; and there would assemble an even larger pandemonium of kin and friends: anthropologists, labor organizers, filmmakers, sculptors, mathematicians, and geniuses with many portfolios. But through the din, James, though ten years older than I, became my best friend, my mentor, and my idol.

When he wasn't around, I would hole up with his old history books. I remember reading his marginalia in those volumes of Toynbee and H.G. Wells and others—"Nonsense," "Not so," "Get your dates right," and "Interesting"—and thinking, *I want to know that much about all this some day*. Judging by the scrawl, he must have been a teenager when he wrote it. I still don't know as much as he did then.

When he was around, he gave the greatest running tutorial imaginable. I will never forget one lunchtime when, apropos of nothing, he asked me across the table: "So, who WAS the closest thing to a successful fascist in American history?" Huey Long, I guessed, and he smiled, gleamed a little, and sweetly snapped, "That's right!" I felt as if I'd started to make it. But it wasn't all books or history talk that connected James to others. It was also games of "Risk" and "Diplomacy" that stretched on for days, and horsing around at the family's weed-bottomed lake, and talking politics, endlessly. What impressed me most was his refusal to be doctrinaire, his openness to sharp ideas no matter where on the political spectrum they came from. An unabashed left-liberal, he could find political intelligence in the likes of Barry Goldwater, which may have said more about him than about Goldwater, but was eye-opening all the same.

Which is what James really devoted his life to doing: opening the eyes of anyone lucky enough to come his way. He held a tutorial with the world, which filtered out through this magazine and others, and through his friends and listeners, into political talk and action all around the country. He died (from a heart attack) much too young, and for those of us who knew and loved him, it is devastating.

SEAN WILENTZ

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Racial Stigma

Editors:

James T. Campbell's Summer 2002 review of Glenn Loury's *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality* is disappointing in its refusal to seriously engage Loury's ideas.

Loury's central argument that racial stigma is a key explanation of black/white racial inequality is an original claim and one that deserves serious consideration. It is an important contribution as social scientists try to understand why racial inequality has proven to be so intractable. To be clear, there is no scholarly consensus on this question. As economist James Heckman has noted, there is little evidence that contemporary labor market discrimination can explain much of this inequality. Campbell is correct to point to differences in educational attainment as an important factor. Economists Derek Neal and William Johnson have shown how on the order of 75 percent of black/white wage differences are associated with differences in educational attainment, at least as measured by test scores. There are good reasons to think that stigma can explain at least some of these differences. Research by psychologist Claude Steele on stereotype threat has shown how the test performance of African-American students can be adversely affected by stigma of the sort Loury discusses. In contrast, research on the role of per pupil expenditure differences as an explanation of educational differences is noteworthy in its inability to find strong effects.

Much of Campbell's review is driven by his low opinion of Loury's past political activities and of black "conservatives" in general (a term that hardly ever really applied to Loury). This leads him to spend much of the review on irrelevancies concerning Loury himself, as opposed to his arguments. Campbell also seems motivated by an animus toward economic reasoning. This leads to nonsensical assertions such as the one that thought experiments are "a misbegotten offspring of rational choice theory..." This claim will be news to students of physics; gedankenexperiments have an honored place in twentieth-century science. Loury's thought experiments, like all successful types of such reasoning, are nothing more than a way of providing analytical clarity in developing specific lines of causality, in this case from particular social interactions (stigma) to particular social outcomes (inequality).

Campbell also faults Loury for not vigorously endorsing affirmative action, which Loury's arguments are claimed to commend. This is a curious criticism given Loury's central preoccupation with stigma. In other recent writings, Loury has argued in favor of what he calls "developmental" as opposed to "procedural" affirmative action. The distinction is that one targets resources to improve the qualifications of disadvantaged groups while the other alters selection criteria. Developmental approaches can thus avoid the stigma associated with conventional affirmative action policies. This perspective on affirmative action is certainly not incoherent.

Loury's arguments are hardly uncontroversial. An open question is how one can empirically assess the effects of stigma for overall levels of inequality. His views deserve better than to be treated with an irony bordering on contempt.

STEVEN N. DURLAUF
Madison, Wisconsin

James T. Campbell Replies

I am sorry that Professor Durlauf found my review of Glenn Loury's *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality* disappointing. I found the book disappointing. Let me take his concerns in turn.

Yes, I devoted some attention—about a quarter of the essay—to Loury's unusual history; one of the occupational hazards of being a historian is believing that what people said and did in the past matters. Glenn Loury was an important, if idiosyncratic, participant in the Reagan-era assault on the so-called "black underclass," precisely the group he now professes to champion. Surely that is worth mentioning. It also seemed appropriate, given the emphasis that Loury himself has placed on his political "rehabilitation," to ask just how thorough his conversion has been.

I can't say much about physics, but in debates about race and poverty I stand by my statement about thought experiments (which Durlauf misquotes). Whether this constitutes "an animus to economic reasoning," I cannot say. If "economic reasoning" means treating individuals

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in contextual vacuums, without regard for history, politics or social structure, then I plead guilty.

I actually found the concept of stigma interesting and potentially useful, as I said in the essay. History matters. But I was uneasy with Loury's tendency to reify the concept, as well as his denigration of other explanatory factors (including the continuing reality of formal racial discrimination in the United States). More broadly, I was struck by the singularly ahistorical way in which Loury deployed the concept—an ironic fate for an idea introduced to account for the weight of history. In his most extreme formulations, stigma becomes a kind of timeless, irreducible quotient, so enmeshed in our processes of "social cognition" as to render all efforts to combat racial inequality foredoomed. Stripped of the social science veneer, this is precisely the argument that conservatives have advanced against desegregation (remember Dwight Eisenhower's disquisition on the human heart following *Brown v. Board*?), the sit-in movement, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Act, affirmative action, and every other political movement or public policy designed to redress racial inequality.

On the question of affirmative action, I thank Professor Durlauf for making explicit an idea that Loury only implied: that affirmative action itself stigmatizes black people. I think this idea is a canard, but insofar as some people believe it, the solution is surely not to surrender the policy but to join the argument, to do a better job explaining and defending its logic and necessity. In the context of higher education, for example, one might start by asking why we do not hear more lamentations about the "stigma" and psychological "damage" we inflict on alumni children, student athletes, or the scions of America's wealthiest families, all of whom benefit vastly more from preferential admissions policies than do African-Americans. But there I go being ironical again.

Not Enough Dissent

Editors:

Your October 7 panel discussion [see ed. note] on patriotism evoked strong reactions: dismay at its format and outrage at its content. Why was only one point of view presented? Surely there must be some dissenters, even within your own ranks, who cannot accept the idea of patriotism as a response to the threatening situation we all face.

How ironic that in the midst of a groundswell of opposition to the administration's war plans and its cynical use of patriotism to hide its many abuses, *Dissent* should choose to move to the right and become part of the jingoistic parade. Comments heard after the meeting ended indicated that others shared my reaction. Why, I wonder, were there not more voices of protest from the audience? Perhaps they were in shock.

Please cancel my subscription and remove my name from your mailing list.

MYRA RUSSEL
New York, N.Y.

ED. NOTE: The writer refers to a public forum on "Patriotism in a Time of War" that featured Michael Kazin, presenting material from his article in the Fall 2002 issue of Dissent *("A Patriotic Left") and Joanne Barkan and Jim Sleeper presenting the material that appears in the current issue. The debate continues in the Spring Arguments section.*

An Expanded Role for *Dissent*

Editors:

What follows are some thoughts about how *Dissent* might play a more proactive role in the ongoing effort to construct a more relevant left in the United States.

It seems to me that *Dissent* occupies a distinct niche on the left and within the left press because: (a) it is a voice for democratic socialism/social democracy; (b) it sees the progressive wing of the Democratic Party as the most strategic avenue for effecting change; and (c) it has taken a very forthright position in favor of necessary and just military interventions. By being a strong advocate for all three of these positions, *Dissent* stands out from all other tendencies on the left.

As far as progressive organizations go, Democratic Socialists of America comes closest to sharing *Dissent*'s political orientation. But even DSA has been surprisingly inconsistent in its stance toward third parties and on supporting necessary military interventions.

Among the broad range of progressive publications, the *American Prospect* is closest ideologically to *Dissent*. But while the two magazines often feature the same writers, *Dissent* identifies itself as a democratic socialist publication, which places it to the left of *TAP*—an important distinction. Furthermore, *Dissent* takes a consistently anti-imperialist approach to U.S. foreign policy (although many on the left would dispute this), while *TAP* is often more liberal than left in its analysis. One key similarity (especially for the purposes of this discussion) is that, like *Dissent*, *TAP* stands for a coherent political position.

What about the *Nation*? It is arguably the most important journal on the left. But on the two key issues that currently divide the left— working within the Democratic Party and supporting just military interventions—it is all over the place, depending on whose articles you are read-

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ing. Hence it can only play a very limited role in helping the left to become more cohesive.

In These Times has, for the most part, been more consistent than the *Nation* in its stance toward the Democratic Party—with Joel Bleifus's strong editorials on Nader and the Democrats being an excellent case in point. At the same time, however, other regular contributors to *ITT* favor some form of third party politics or anarchism. Such an eclectic mix has its strengths, but helping the left to achieve ideological coherence and political unity is not one of them.

The *Progressive* and Z are both on the far end of the left spectrum, and on the two issues that have so bitterly divided progressives, both have taken positions diametrically opposite to those of *Dissent* and *TAP*. There are numerous other journals on the left, some more influential than others, but I won't spend any time discussing them here. It should be noted, though, that *Mother Jones* is far and away the most widely read magazine on the left, albeit one that doesn't stand for any particular strategy/ideology.

Dissent's primary strength lies in what it does stand for, philosophically and strategically, but its relative lack of influence raises a number of key questions: How can *Dissent* play a more relevant role in the real world of political change? How can it help create a more organic link between left-wing intellectuals and progressive movements that are out there organizing on a daily basis? How can it serve as a more compelling magnet for progressives who consider themselves more left than liberal and, as a result, can't feel entirely comfortable with *TAP*? And at the same time, how can *Dissent* more effectively serve as a political home for leftists who are turned off by the *Nation*'s all too frequently strident and dogmatic columnists, letters, and overall tone, and who are looking for a journal that has a coherent identity?

Although I don't claim to have any answers to these questions, I do have some suggestions that I hope may help to stimulate some discussion and fresh thinking among the editors and board of *Dissent,* as well as among its readers and subscribers.

For starters, I would urge you to consider altering somewhat *Dissent*'s mission. In my view, there is an urgent need for progressive intellectuals to be more involved in discussions about concrete political strategies for the left. By this, I do not mean theoretical discussions about what the left should be all about, or about what positions to take, or about what kind of rhetoric we should use. These kinds of discussion are obviously worthwhile, and *Dissent* already does them extremely well. But we need more than this. And since it isn't happening anywhere else that I can tell, *Dissent* should, in my opinion, take it on. By doing so, I think you/we will be providing an invaluable service for the left.

Let me be more concrete. Why not have a regular section called "Strategies for the Left," or "Getting From Here to There" or something to that effect? These discussions would not be Gore v. Nader type debates. We have had quite enough of those by now. Instead, they might be about how best to reach out to the Naderites. Such an article might discuss specific ways to educate and organize groups of progressive students on campuses to evaluate the consequences of supporting third parties. Perhaps most important, this new section should feature articles that discuss reconnecting the organizational dots on the left. We need to marshal our intellectual skills to focus on such concrete and perennial questions as, "How can the left finally become greater than the sum of its parts?" Discussions of this sort would include figuring out what organizational forms are needed to create an identifiable progressive wing of the Democratic Party. Related discussions would look at the following sorts of questions: Is USAction pursuing a strategy that is leading anywhere? What about the Campaign for America's Future? How should the AFL-CIO relate to these organizations? How can the Progressive Caucus on Capitol Hill play a more active role on the left? How should progressives relate to the Democratic Leadership Council? Just how and why did the broader left "fall asleep at the switch" and allow the Workers World Party and its front groups to exert so much harmful influence on the antiwar movement?! Why has Noam Chomsky become the single most important figure on the left? What do the left media need to do to become more influential?

All these topics are really worth exploring. But they are, for the most part, more specific in nature than the kinds of articles that *Dissent* typically publishes. However, the overall political situation is so grave, and the internal crisis on the left is so severe, that the broader progressive movement (*Dissent* included) needs to consider all sorts of new approaches. If *Dissent* were to regularly run articles on strategies for the left, it would not mean eliminating all of the more theoretical pieces that *Dissent* so excels at. But it would mean being more selective about publishing articles that have limited usefulness and that are written in dense, academic language. And again, all this could be accomplished by simply adding a regular section to the magazine.

There are a lot of unaffiliated leftists out there who are looking for an accessible intellectual and political home, a home that affirms the value of a democratic socialist perspective while also validating the belief that working within the left-wing of the Democratic Party is

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the only realistic electoral strategy available; a home that continues to express the view that even though the United States is an imperialist power, U.S. interventions are sometimes worth supporting (while always strongly pressuring the government to refrain from military tactics that needlessly expose civilians to the horrors of war). *Dissent* has the potential to provide such a home for countless leftists who are currently lost, confused, or adrift.

Dissent is the premier intellectual journal on the left today. But for the left to prosper and grow, we need to substantially narrow the gap between intellectuals on the one hand, and activists and organizers on the other. Events are rapidly moving in the wrong direction. While engaged intellectual reflection will always be an essential form of political activism—with all of the many dire problems now facing humanity, we need a new paradigm. Left intellectuals need to strike a new balance between analyzing on a relatively abstract level and offering analyses that could more directly affect politics and organizing in the here and now. *Dissent* is very well situated to move in this direction. If it does so, the pages of *Dissent* can become an important forum for developing new and creative ideas and strategies for the day-to-day campaigns and struggles that lie ahead.

KEN BROCINER
Somerville, Massachusetts

Mitchell Cohen and Michael Walzer Respond

Ken Brociner's letter raises important questions for *Dissent*. And our response here is meant to be tentative, provisional; we will post the letter on our Web site and invite other editors (and readers) to respond. To some extent, we agree with Ken: we have tried to do some of what he wants the magazine to do, and probably can and should do more. David Morse's account of Seattle, 1999 (Summer 2001) dealt not only with the media coverage of the demonstration, but also with the strategy and tactics of the demonstrators; Liza Featherstone's description of the campus campaign against private prisons (Fall 2000) analyzed the "boycott strategy" adopted by the students; and Jeffrey C. Isaac's long, thoughtful, worried analysis of antisweatshop organizing (Fall 2001) provides an admirable model of how intellectuals can engage with politics-on-the-ground. Perhaps we should do this more regularly; perhaps we should publicize the fact that we are doing it and feature more debates about the strategy and tactics of the left.

But a political and intellectual magazine cannot be a movement; it cannot take the place of a movement; it cannot summon forth a movement by writing as if it exists. Right now, there is no serious political movement operating across the full range of issues that should be of interest to the left. There is the AFL-CIO, about whose internal politics and strategic options we should certainly be writing. There are protests and demonstrations on particular questions that we should be "covering" both from close up and from a critical distance. But given our resources and given the limited significance of today's activism, *Dissent*'s focus will be, has to be, elsewhere.

Over the long haul, the left's ideas are more important than its strategies. We have to be a magazine of sustained intellectual reflection, recalling, elaborating, re-inventing the idea of a democratic and egalitarian society. If the ideologists of the market, the defenders of global capitalism, win the debate about how social forces work, in whose interests they work, and with what long-term effects, there won't be much that left-wing organizers will be able to do. *Dissent*'s primary critical role will be played out within that debate.

Still, there are a lot of articles of the sort that Ken wants to see in the magazine that we would be happy to publish, if we could find them. We would love to carry the journal of a labor organizer, reflecting on the day-to-day difficulties of the job. We need to provide a tough-minded analysis of the divisions within the movement against a war with Iraq. We would welcome the articles he suggests about how to pull the followers of Ralph Nader into a wider and more effective left politics, about Noam Chomsky's influence among students, about leftist media of all sorts. Articles of this kind are not so easy to write. We hope that this discussion will stimulate the production of more and better examples.

ERRATUM: We regret the misspelling of Pim Fortuyn's name on p. 39 of the Fall issue.

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In the midst of the Second World War and the 1944 election, it was the example of Abraham Lincoln, "the greatest wartime President in our history," that Franklin D. Roosevelt evoked when he addressed the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. But fifty-nine years later, as America edges closer to a second Gulf War, it is FDR who provides the best historical example of a wartime president we can learn from.

What makes Roosevelt so relevant, as the Bush administration wavers between unilateralism and multilateralism, is that, from 1937 until his death in 1945, he constantly strove to maintain a policy that, in a time of unprecedented danger, balanced American self-interest with American commitment to a shared world order.

At the heart of Roosevelt's thinking was the idea, first articulated in his 1937 "Quarantine the Aggressors" speech, delivered in response to Japan's invasion of China, that a new kind of terrifying war had become the norm. The old restraints, Roosevelt argued, in eerily contemporary language, were gone. America was now faced with a world in which "without warning or justification" civilians are "ruthlessly murdered with bombs from the air." In such a world, America's survival was threatened, FDR believed; and four years before Pearl Harbor, he warned, "If these things come to pass in other parts of the world, let no one imagine that America will escape."

Roosevelt saw no point in sugarcoating the significance of America's new vulnerability, and, even more important, he did not imagine war becoming less terrifying with the passage of time. Technology would, he believed, only make warfare worse. But Roosevelt did not think that America had to be paralyzed by these transformations. There was solace to be taken from the fact that in the future no country could afford to think only of itself. As he observed in his Fourth Inaugural Address, "We have learned that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned that we must live as men, not as ostriches, nor as dogs in the manger."

As we face the possibility of war with Iraq and try to figure out the best way to prevent future 9/11s, the hopes FDR voiced about international cooperation seem increasingly remote from our experience. What has not changed since the 1940s, however, are the risks for America in going it alone. To be sure, over a short period of time, wars and interventions can be successfully undertaken by a great power like America acting alone. But unilateralism cannot be sustained over an extended period on multiple fronts. In an age of biological and nuclear weapons, the great advantage terrorists have over conventional armies is that they can move rapidly across borders. They can be detected and caught only if intelligence agencies and governments cooperate. And that is America's problem. The only way for us to secure the cooperation we need in fighting terrorism is for other nations to want to help us. They don't have to oppose us openly; their neutrality is enough to undermine our battle with terrorism.

All of which brings us back to Roosevelt's view of the struggle to defeat Japan and Germany as inseparable from the struggle to secure a shared world order. When, in 1941, FDR spoke about the Four Freedoms, he pictured a future in which freedom from want and fear were as important as freedom of religion and expression. The poorest countries could identify with the Four Freedoms. Today, America needs to offer the world, as the Bush administration has not, an equally compelling picture of the future. Otherwise, why join us in a battle with terrorism that promises to be long and painful and that a nation just might, if it made the right deals, avoid?

Nicolaus Mills

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